Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you pay attention to where your food comes from?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Stampede

Thousands of panicked pilgrims stampeded Sunday at a remote temple in India, killing 145.

ASIA...Page 15

Youth Day

Some 42 local students attend the five-day World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, in July.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Asiana to start Osaka-Saipan flights in Dec. **PAGE 3**
High school teacher, Davis, joins delegate race. **PAGE 6**

CUC gets $3.5M MPLT check

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. yesterday received a $3.5-million loan from Marianas Public Land Trust to pay for emergency power and settle debts with its contractors.

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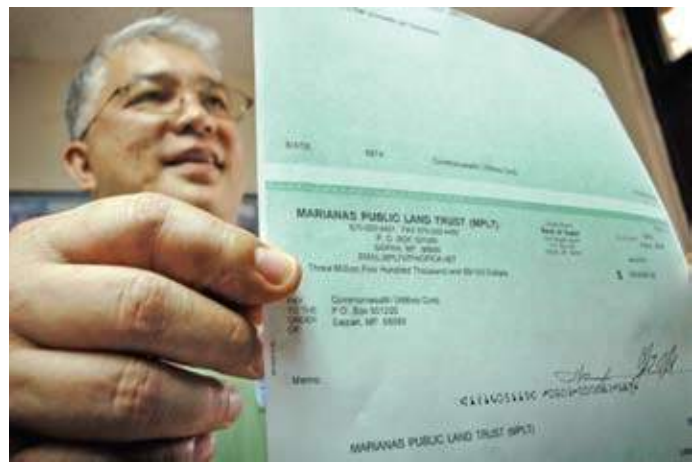
WHAT NEXT

- Aggreko to ship generators this weekend
- Rolling outages seen to end by mid-Sept.



Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Antonio Muna holds the check worth $3.5 million issued by the Marianas Public Land Trust at the MPLT office in Oleai yesterday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A somber Michael Dotts looks out the window of the Law Offices of O'Connor Berman Dotts & Banes, on the second Floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

Fire hits O'Connor law office

- Constant blackouts allegedly triggered blaze
- Damage estimated at $100,000

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fire allegedly caused by the constant turning on and off of electric power engulfed the O'Connor Berman Dotts & Banes law office on the second floor of the eight-story Marianas Business Plaza building in Susupe early Sunday morning.

As of 7pm last night, Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro had yet to

See FIRE on Page 4

8 Saipan residents make history in Tiananmen Sq.

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

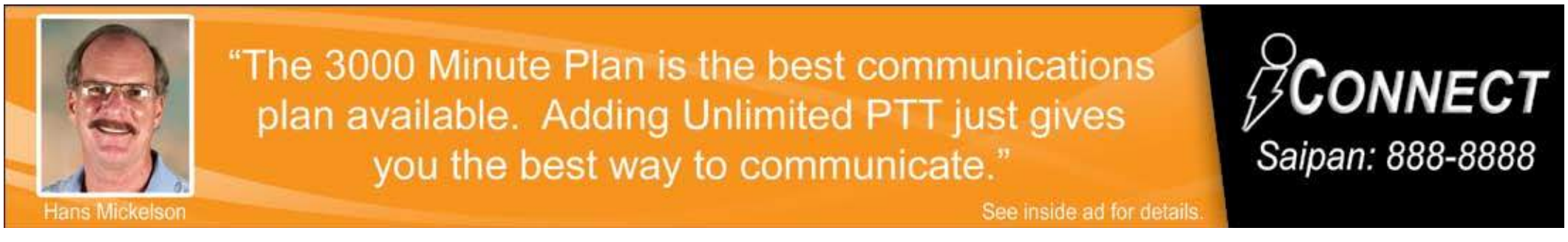
Eight Saipan residents made history this past weekend as they joined 2,000 other musicians to play in Tiananmen Square as part of the Olympic Orchestra.

The Saturday performance was the first time foreigners were allowed to play in the square. The lo-

See 8 SAIPAN on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan band members pose with their instruments at Tiananmen Square. From left, Ray MacDuff, Trini MacDuff, Michio Nagata, David Bautista, Raegina Castro, Gayle Martin, Ted Parker, and Anthony Gomez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Local

NMC completes review key to accreditation

The Northern Marianas College recently completed a comprehensive review of program documents fundamental to the college's efforts to meet accreditation requirements.

The review, led by the college's Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee, involved a meticulous and painstaking review and discussion of NMC's key departments' Form 2 documents. A Form 2 document provides information and analysis of a program's history, specific services/activities; data/evidence used for planning and assessment purposes; human, physical, and technology resources, and recommendations for improvement.

To ensure extreme focus during the assessment, the PROAC members met over two separate weekends in full day meetings held on July 19 and July 20 and from July 25 to July 27.

PROAC is NMC's official institutional assessment committee and is charged with facilitating the program review process. The committee reviewed submissions from all academic programs, academic support and administrative units.

The Committee will be prepared to provide feedback to programs starting Aug. 4 in the form of a composite report. The report covers a number of items including strengths and areas for improvement, findings and recommendations at the program and institutional levels, and next steps.

Dr. Carmen Fernandez, NMC president and ex-officio member of PROAC, participated in all the review sessions.

"The extensive deliberations that took place were so beneficial," Fernandez said. "It was so gratifying to see the results of the hard work from all levels of NMC and it will be more so when we begin to implement the improvements recommended by the program review process."

"The program review process is a powerful exercise that leads to dialogue and engagement at all levels of the institution that is so healthy," Fernandez added. "PROAC is to be commended for their sacrifice and dedication during the review period."

Fernandez

The next step in the Program Review process is for PROAC to forward the Composite Report to College Council and the Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation Committee for action. Results of program review will be linked to the strategic plan and budget allocation. ***(NMC)***

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

LIBRARY CLEANUP

Joeten Kiyu Public Library acting director Jennifer Rospel, library staff and student volunteers from Marianas High School gather for a photo during their first community service cleanup around the library in Susupe yesterday. Other picture shows Rospel, library staff Dorsha Quinto and Celina Foreman removing grass and dry leaves during the cleanup.

MARINE MONUMENT
PUBLIC PRESENTATION SCHEDULE
for the Week of August 4, 2008

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00pm	4:00pm	5:00pm
Concept Overview	Economic Study	Concept Overview

Presentations are open to the public and anyone interested in learning more is invited to attend.
No reservations required.

We are located at the JT Guerrero building in Garapan next to Asia Scooter Rentals.
This schedule will rotate weekly and presentations will be added.
Schedules will be noticed weekly on Tuesdays.
If you need more information please call us at 234-2665.

'Probable cause finding is not enough ground to forfeit bail'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A finding of probable cause to charge a defendant who is on bail in a previous case is not sufficient evidence to forfeit the bail, according to Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman.

"The probable cause finding does not present enough evidence to satisfy the preponderance of the evidence standard," Wiseman said.

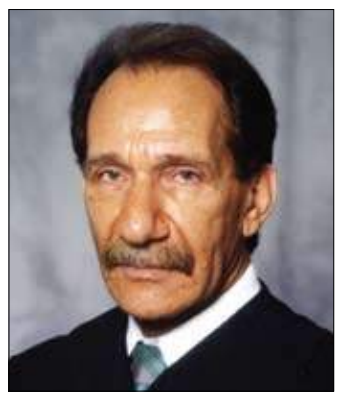
The judge discussed the bail forfeiture issue in his order issued yesterday denying the CNMI government's motion to forfeit John M. Namauleg's bail.

Wiseman ruled that it is the government's responsibility to prove that Namauleg violated the conditions of his release. In this instance, he found that the government has failed to meet the standard required.

According to court records, the Attorney General's Office charged Namauleg with multiple counts of theft, attempted theft, and forgery in connection with fraudulent cashing of checks belonging to defunct garment manufacturer Neo Fashion Inc. from December 2007 through January 2008.

On Feb. 21, 2008, the court approved a modified bail order for the defendant. The order allowed his temporary release from custody subject to certain conditions.

One of the conditions was for Namauleg to obey all Commonwealth laws. As a security for his release, he was entrusted to a third party custodian who signed a $20,000 unsecured/appearance bond. In addition, a $5,000 was posted.



Wiseman

The government alleged that Namauleg committed the following acts within days of his release: attempted second degree murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and aggravated assault and battery.

During a preliminary hearing on March 5, 2008, the court found probable cause for each charge.

The government, through Assistant Attorney General Melissa Simms, moved to forfeit Namauleg's bail.

Simms asserted that the preliminary hearing regarding the newer charges constitutes sufficient basis to warrant the forfeiture of the bond.

Assistant Public Defender Malik Edwards, counsel for Namauleg, argued, among other things, that the proposed forfeiture based on the probable cause finding is not supported by CNMI law and would be unconstitutional.

In his ruling Wiseman stated that in the CNMI, a bail forfeiture is required in instances where a breach of condition of a bond occurs.

However, the judge said, the court may, at its discretion, "direct that a forfeiture be set aside…if it appears that justice does not require the enforcement of the forfeiture."

Wiseman said a preliminary hearing is held in order to accord an arrested person the right to a determination of probable cause as a prerequisite to extended restraint of liberty following arrest.

"One of the main problems contemplated by the instant case is that in order to forfeit bail most courts have found that the breach of a condition must be proven by a preponderance of evidence, rather than by a mere finding of probable cause," he said.

Because the government relied solely on a finding of probable cause to support their forfeiture, Wiseman said, the court is unable to grant the motion to forfeit Namauleg's bail.

Wiseman determined that breaching a condition of bail release, even conditions not relating to appearance, can constitute enough grounds for forfeiting bail.

The judge said the government submitted as their only evidence the bill of information of probable cause.

Wiseman said the March 5 preliminary hearing finding a sufficient factual basis that Namauleg committed the crimes is an insufficient basis to order a bail of forfeiture.

"The Rules of Evidence do not apply in preliminary examinations in criminal cases and thus hearsay evidence may have been allowed in finding probable cause to charge the defendant," he pointed out.

Asiana to start Osaka-Saipan flights in Dec.

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
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BUSINESS EDITOR

Asiana Airlines is soon to launch new direct flights from Osaka, Japan, to Saipan, a move that comes as the CNMI is seeing early signs of a revival in the local tourism market due to an influx of visitors from key Asian markets.

In a statement Monday, the Marianas Visitors Authority disclosed that Asiana, which already operates daily flights between the CNMI and Korea, will begin flights along the new route Dec. 19.

Flights from Osaka will depart for Saipan Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, while return flights will depart Monday, Thursday and Saturday. The airline plans to use 177-seat Airbus planes for the route, which MVA projects will bring more than 20,000 travelers to the CNMI within its first year of operation.

"We are thrilled to further invest in the tourism industry in the CNMI," said Asiana Airlines General Manager K.J. Kim. "With our flights from Korea and our upcoming flights from Japan we will bring in visitors from the number one and two source markets."

Word of the new Asiana flights comes after MVA officials last month reported slight gains in tourism from Asian markets like Korea, Japan and Russia. The CNMI saw 30,936 tourists in June, a 3-percent bump over the 29,989 seen in the same month last year, according to MVA statistics.

Some local business leaders have reported a small boost related to added Japanese tourists recently after the arrival of added flights from Tokyo. Japanese visitors in June totaled 15,904, while in June 2008 that number stood at 15,446.

Meanwhile, 9,616 visitors Korean visitors arrived in June, compared to 9,139 in June 2007-a 5 percent increase. Korean tourism to date is up 31 percent over last year.

MVA has said previously that Korean arrivals are expected to stabilize, as it has been more than one year since the launch of daytime flights from Seoul on May 27, 2007.

In addition, Russian tourism saw a 158-percent increase in June over last year, making it the top market performer, yet the total number of Russian visitors remains low at 834 for the month.

6th Micronesian Police Executives Association meeting begins today

The three-day 6th annual Micronesian Police Executives Association conference will kick off today at the World Resort Hotel's Taga Hall in Susupe.

The CNMI Department of Public Safety, Commonwealth Ports Authority and the Department of Corrections are hosting the event. The Department of Public Safety hosted the same conference last year.

Newly appointed acting DPS commissioner Santiago Tudela will deliver his opening remarks at 8am, followed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, who will welcome the guests and facilitators.

Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said that police chiefs, commissioners and directors from various Micronesian law enforcement entities come together at the annual MPEA conference to discuss issues concerning the region.

Expected to attend today's meeting are Palau Bureau of Public Safety Director Norvert Yano, Kosrae Division of Public Safety chief Edmond Salik and Guam Police Department Police Commander Col. Joaquin Reyes.

Other expected participants are Chuuk Public Safety Department Director Jimmy Emilio, Pohnpei Public Safety Department director Lucas Carlos, Yap Division of Public Safety chief Christo Fugmow and Republic of the Marshall Islands' Department of Public Safety Commissioner George Lanwi.

Presenters in this morning's session will be Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric O'Malley, U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Rudy Kube and U.S. Navy Capt. Ulysses Zalamea.

In the afternoon session, Federal Bureau of Investigation special agents Mike Gadsden, Jim Barry and Joseph Auther will present.

Other facilitators are U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration special agent Dan Holcom, Guam Police Department Forensic Science Division operations chief Lt. Manuel Babauta, Guam 29th Legislature Sen. Frank Ishizaki and CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice Alexandro Castro.

Topics for discussion will include human trafficking, U.S. military buildup, the FBI intelligence process, terrorism in Micronesia and Asia, transnational organized crime, regional drug trends, regional crime labs, the Friends of the Crime Lab Non-Profit project and a discussion on law enforcement perspective. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

KODAK MOMENTS
Tourists take souvenir photos of the amazing view of Banzai Cliff in Marpi.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

CK roundhouse council sets 2009 target date

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Representatives of local organizations have set the end of 2009 as the target date they hope to complete the restoration and revitalization of the area around the Chalan Kanoa roundhouse.

During a meeting Monday, members of the Leadership Roundhouse Courtyard Project discussed the design and funding for a proposed memorial center and monument that would pay homage to past community members.

"The Roundhouse, as everyone knows, has a significant history," Council adviser William Torres said about the area considered the ancient capital of Saipan. "In essence, it defines us as a people."

The memorial center would sit on 785 square meters, with an additional 942 square meters requested, in Chalan Kanoa, across from the U.S. Post Office.

"There is more than ample space for people to visit," Torres said.

The Council is looking at adding names of elected and appointed community leaders to the memorial center. A partial list at Monday's meeting had more than 200 names, and "was not even near completion," Robert Hunter, executive director of the NMI Museum of History and Culture, said. It is unclear how names will be narrowed down, but the Council plans on eventually asking for community input.

Torres said he would like to see a finished product similar to the courtyard at American Memorial Park.

"It should be simple at this point and time," he said. "The essential is to recognize those leaders of the past."

Torres said the group would seek appropriated money, federal assistance and private donations to fund the project.

"It will be anything out there to make this project happen," he added.

Steve Tilley, of the CNMI Zoning Office, said it would be difficult to estimate the cost of the structure without a set design.

"Is it a historic monument? Is it a gathering place?" "Will there be restrooms? Sidewalks? Those will all drive design," he said.

Torres said the project might need to be done in phases.

"We need to dream big and start small," he added.

All of the members agreed the area has become rundown and needs to be cleaned up first and foremost.

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Private sector to CUC: No power for sale

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

In a closed-door conference Monday, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. tried to put together the beginnings of a plan that would have let it purchase excess electricity produced by local businesses with gas-powered generators—a bid to boost CUC's power supply—yet the private sector's response offered little hope that the embattled utility will get any added help meeting the CNMI's power needs.

At issue in the conference, held at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's office in Garapan, was CUC's effort to arrange an agreement for so-called "net metering," a practice in which businesses or private citizens sell the electricity they produce to the public power grid. Those who attended the meeting said CUC officials polled local business owners to learn whether they have the generating capacity needed for such an arrangement.

Recently enacted legislation has made net metering possible and CUC will soon finalize regulations letting homeowners and businesses take advantage of the new law.

However, several sources at Monday's conference—attended by representatives of at least eight hotels, CUC officials and others—emerged from it less than optimistic that net metering will resolve any of the CNMI's chronic power shortages, which have already sparked widespread public outcry. Many reported that businesses declined to take part in net metering because the private generators they use are designed to meet only their needs and do not provide enough power for them to sell excess back to CUC. Moreover, others noted that supplying power to CUC could lead to other problems.

"It's not that we don't want to help out," said Mark Moss, who manages facilities for DFS Saipan Ltd. "But why would I want to put more of a hardship on our system in terms of maintenance and wear and tear to give back to an agency that should be providing power to us?"

In addition, Moss noted that the estimated $1 million DFS has invested to meet its power needs is enough only to power DFS itself and not to sell any to the government.

Officials with CUC were not immediately available for a response as of press time. Yet Rep. Tina Sablan (I-Saipan), who attended the conference, said the effort to find additional electric power for CUC in the private sector got a meager response.

"We just wanted to find out if these businesses first have the excess generating capacity and, if they do, whether they would sell that back to the grid," Sablan said. "But we didn't even get very far, because as we went around the room, nobody said they had any excess generating capacity."

During the meeting, she noted, CUC representatives floated the idea of reviving generators at the now defunct La Fiesta complex, an empty building once intended as the site of a shopping mall. Those generators, she said, could provide up to 3 megawatts of electricity. On net metering, Sablan said that after the inquiry, it appears CUC can now explore other options to meet the CNMI's power demands.

"At least we can say that we've explored this option and it's not feasible, so now we can move on to another option," she said.

Kyle Calabrese, the Chamber's executive director, echoed Sablan's sentiments.

"Although the answer is perhaps not the one that all of us as consumers would like to hear, it's important to know that answer so we can move on and look at other options as a community," he said.

Lynn Knight, president of the Hotel Association of the Northern Marianas Islands, attended the conference and said CUC's power problems have put a strain on businesses large and small throughout the CNMI, including hotels.

"Hotels right now have to focus on efficiency," she said. "It's just as hard for large businesses to survive in this power crisis as any of the others. The overall message of the meeting was that hotels don't have any excess capacity."

ERRATUM

In Friday's story, "CHC, Fitial ink accord with Japanese hospitals," the caption was incorrect. Joining Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in signing the agreement was Dr. Masanobu Maeda, pediatric Cardiac Surgeon and Vice President for Aichi Children's Health & Medical Center. Our apologies.

CUC

From Page 1

About $1.5 million of the money was immediately deposited into the account of the Scotland-based Aggreko International, which CUC had hired to provide up to 15 megawatts of temporary power to Saipan. CUC will use the balance to pay debts to contractors: $1.1 million to Pacific Marine Industrial Corp. and $800,000 to Telesource CNMI.

Under the terms of the loan, MPLT will charge CUC 7 percent interest to be paid in monthly increments of about $20,000. At the end of three years, CUC is supposed to repay the $3.5 million principal.

CUC executive director Antonio S. Muna said Aggreko is poised to ship the rental generators from the company's Singapore headquarters this weekend. CUC anticipates delivery of the generators by Sept. 8, 2008. The engines are expected to be operational within six days after delivery, and put an end to the rotating blackouts on Saipan.

"I am relieved not only for me, but from the public's standpoint," Muna said after receiving the $3.5 million check from MPLT. "With the emergency power from Aggreko, we can manage our power supply and eliminate the rotating blackouts that we've been going through for the past two years. That will give us a chance to step back and approach fixing the engines without the desperation of meeting power demand at the same time," he added.

Muna described the process of getting the loan and sealing the Aggreko deal as "a roller-coaster ride."

MPLT previously approved the loan, but withdraw its decision due to legal flaws. It took actions by the Legislature, the administration, and MPLT to make the loan—and ultimately the Aggreko contract—happen.

The Legislature first passed a law earmarking $3.4 million of MPLT's future income to CUC. Then it passed another measure exempting temporary power contracts such as that of Aggreko from review by the Public Utilities Commission. For his part, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial initially issued an executive order lifting the $500,000 ceiling on CUC's borrowing authority. He subsequently amended that order to simply increase the CUC debt cap to $5 million, instead of removing it altogether.

By granting the loan, MPLT effectively declined the $3.4 million advance authorized by Public Law 16-7. The MPLT board of trustees, in the resolution adopted yesterday, said the advance is against the Constitution.

The board explained that the Constitution does not allow the Trust to do anything with earnings from public land use except invest them. Therefore, any transfer of money to CUC has to be in the form of an "investment," such a loan where MPLT can earn interest.

FIRE

From Page 1

release the report about the fire to the media.

Saipan Tribune gathered from witnesses that no one was hurt in the blaze that broke out at 1:30am inside the office of attorney Joseph Horrey. Damage to property was estimated at $100,000. Horrey is a member of the O'Connor law office.

Firefighters managed to prevent the blaze from spreading to other offices and establishments within the building.

Lawyer Robert O'Connor told the media yesterday that there are 14 offices in their law firm—one was completely destroyed while another had 50 percent damage. The rest of offices except for two had smoke and water damage, he added.

"Almost every office has smoke damage. But 98 percent of the files are okay," he said.

He said they believe that the fire started from the battery pack of a computer inside Horrey's office and spread to the office of the secretary.

"So it completely destroyed the lawyer's [Horrey's] office and mostly destroyed the secretary's office. And there is a smoke damage throughout the rest of the office," O'Connor said.

He said 98 percent of their paper files that are in cabinets in different rooms were not damaged.

"The only files that were damaged were the files that happened to be in Joseph Horrey's office. The law firm will recover and should be open for business in a week and should be back to normal in two to three weeks," he said.

O'Connor estimated the damage to property at $100,000.

"All the walls, all the books are covered with smoke. The carpet is completely ruined. The wallpaper is ruined. The couches and desks are ruined. Windows are broken. Computers are smoke filled. We're trying to clean them and save them," he said.

The lawyer said of their files are in computers and that their files storage area was untouched.

"It's a sad thing to see this happen to your law firm. But the client files are safe and we should be back to normal very soon," he said.

O'Connor blamed the constant turning on and off by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s of the power for affecting the UPS battery power in Horrey's computer.

"That probably sparked the fire," he said.

O'Connor learned about the incident Sunday morning. He said the building's security first discovered it at 1:30am and called the fire department.

"It took the fire department about 20 minutes to get here. The fire department did a good job when they got here," he said.

O'Connor said one of their clocks inside attorney David Banes' office is melted.

"The time is set at 1:45 when it melted. So you can see that the air heated up, the upper layer of air went down the hallway and took black smoke with it," he said.

O'Connor said the air-conditioning unit of attorney Michael Dotts, which was 60 feet away from the center of the hall, also melted.

The law office will be temporarily staying at the first floor of the same building for a week.

Saipan Tribune learned that as a result of the fire operation, water leaked to a portion of the first floor occupied by KWAW Radio Com.

The water damaged the radio station's one laptop computer, one computer printer, and one telephone unit. KWAW, however, was business as usual yesterday, using its own generator.

The Marianas Business Plaza (formerly called Nauru Building), which houses about 40 establishments, lost its power due to the fire. The building's crew used its own generator, but it broke down Sunday noon. This prompted some offices to close down yesterday.

The Philippine Consulate and Philippine Overseas Labor Office, along with some offices, were still business as usual despite the blackout.

As of noon yesterday, the building's maintenance personnel were still waiting for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to re-install the power supply to the building.

8 SAIPAN

From Page 1

cal group, together with the Guam Territorial Band, joined youth musicians from Australia, the United States mainland, Japan, New Zealand and China.

Many of the Saipan musicians were interviewed by the Chinese media before the performance. The group was scheduled to perform at the Great Wall Monday.

The eight Saipan musicians are Ray MacDuff, Trini MacDuff, Michio Nagata, David Bautista, Raegina Castro, Gayle Martin, Ted Parker and Anthony Gomez.

The Tiananmen Square event marked China's attempts to increase openness as it takes center stage for the games beginning Friday.

"This band is the first foreign group to perform on this historic ground and we are making history today," Max Ronquillo, leader of the Guam Territorial Band, told Reuters. "This is a significant message from the Chinese to say that China is now open to the world."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan members, front row, join the Guam Territorial Band at Tiananmen Square to perform for the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

For the past several weeks, the eight Saipan residents practiced alongside the Guam Territorial Board to learn such songs as *Olympic Marching Band 2008*, an original composition by John Williams, who scored *Star Wars*; *Adelieland* from the movie *Happy Feet*; *Get On Your Feet*, and a three-part composition by Keith Jenkins.

The Territorial Board performed at Guam's July 21 Liberation Day celebration as a warm-up for the Olympic event. The group also had a send-off performance July 26 at the Guam Premier Outlets.

Some of the Saipan members were unable to pay their way, but the Guam Territorial Board covered their costs up front. To help the students pay off their debt, people can donate money by contacting William Dewitt, band director of the local Pacific Winds band.

Workers to lobby Finance on stimulus checks, may sue

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
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BUSINESS EDITOR

Foreign workers are poised to urge taxation officials at the Department of Finance for talks in a bid to see the release of long delayed federal economic stimulus checks that many of them have yet to get, and may pursue a class action lawsuit if the talks fail.

The federal stimulus checks, a key aspect of the Bush administration's efforts to revitalize the economy in the midst of an ongoing nationwide financial slump, still have not reached scores of local residents, including many foreign workers, according to Irene Tantiado, president of the United Coalition of Workers, a local labor group. Tax officials, however, have already distributed the checks to other recipients. In response, Tantiado said last week the workers are asking Finance to meet with them on the issue and explain the delay. She added that a lawsuit could be on the horizon if the talks fail to yield results.

"If they can help us without litigation, that would be better," Tantiado said in an interview, noting that she has begun discussions with an attorney on the issue. "Individual requests for help are not working and the guest workers have come together out of desperation to seek other means of asking the government for a commitment."

Rather than file suit over the delayed check, Tantiado noted the coalition would prefer a simple agreement from Finance that details a timeline for its plans to release the undelivered checks. "We just want to hear when," she said.

Officials with Finance were not immediately available for a response. Yet Charles Reyes, the governor's spokesman, said the introduction of the stimulus checks has proven a complicated issue for local tax officials and that once a host of problems in some tax filings—such as some incorrect information on tax forms—are resolved, Finance will likely release the remaining checks.

"We're confident that we're abiding by the IRS regulations and applicable laws," Reyes said. "We're looking forward to resolving this issue amicably without the need for a lawsuit."

In related news, foreign workers who are the parents of disabled children—distraught over the prospect of being sent home due to lack of employment—are planning to petition the Department of Homeland Security for relief as it crafts new federal immigration rules for the CNMI.

Scores of alien parents with children who have disabilities ranging from autism to hearing impairments joined together recently in an organized effort to win government assistance. Among them, many are facing the threat of repatriation due to unemployment yet their children are American citizens.

Local immigration and labor officials, according to several workers interviewed, have told these parents repeatedly that their children could remain in the CNMI but that they themselves could not, a position most see as unacceptable. Moreover, access to the therapy and other services their children need is often limited or nonexistent in their home countries.

After a meeting last week that included activist Wendy Doromal, Tantiado said the parents are now preparing a letter to DHS on the issue.

"We have a number of parents whose entry permits will be up soon and they have said they cannot leave their children," Tantiado said Thursday, adding the forthcoming letter will present "a formal request for them to consider the parents when writing the regulations."

This effort comes as Rep. Tina Sablan (I-Saipan) and Edward Salas (R-Saipan) are drafting a letter to the CNMI Department of Labor that includes—among other issues—a request for officials to address the needs of disabled children with foreign parents.

"We should be concerned about any parents with children who have disabilities, foreign and U.S. parents," Sablan said in an interview, noting recent efforts by a local organization to bolster services for all children with disabilities in the CNMI.

Norita urges DPS personnel to work with Tudela on programs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Department of Public Safety Commissioner Claudio K. Norita has urged DPS personnel to work with acting Commissioner Santiago F. Tudela in continuing the 16 programs that he had started.

In a letter to DPS personnel, Norita said his disappointment in his removal centers on the fact that DPS has not fully implemented his programs yet.

The former police chief said he would be saddened to these programs "discarded to the side."

"I ask that you work with the new commissioner on continuing these programs," Norita told DPS personnel.

These programs include:

- Community Outreach through website, newsletter and the Volunteers in Public Safety (VIPS);
- Record Management System (RMS) implementation;
- Implementation of a computerized driver license written test;
- Implementation of the REAL ID program;
- National Incident Management System compliant for all personnel by Sept. 30, 2008;
- $25 Compliant Radio System;
- Graduation of police and fire cadets;
- Directive 105 on DPS reorganization and delegation of authority;
- Protect the jobs of fellow DPS employees who are deployed;
- Addressing Fair Labor Standards Act issues;
- Taking pride in wearing the uniform;
- Completion of the Fusion Center for Information Sharing;
- Removal of old evidence and firearms;
- Ensuring equal distribution of Compact Impact funds;
- Digitizing old documents through the use of laser fiche; and
- Implementing fees for non-emergency calls through regulations.

Norita acknowledged that some DPS personnel have set aside plans to pursue better opportunities outside the department because they saw the vision of what the department can achieve.

"I thank you for your sacrifice in staying back to help us steer our department on its plotted course," he told the personnel.

The former commissioner said he is proud to say that DPS personnel have projected professionalism and pride in the work they do.

"I see your eyes sparkle in knowing that the efforts you are making are part of a plan to help our department become accountable and professional," he said.

Norita said DPS personnel should expect changes as this is usual for any change of command.

"However, it is not what you need now and I apologize that I was not given the opportunity to ease ruffled feathers or soothe hurting pride," he said.

Norita vowed to continue to be an advocate for DPS.

"I will be vigilant and vocal on what this administration's plan or lack of plan in making DPS what is should be," he said.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial terminated Norita as chief of DPS effective last Friday. Tudela was named acting commissioner.

Tudela used to serve as DPS commissioner under the Babauta administration. When confirmed by the Senate, he will be the 4th DPS commissioner under the Fitial administration. Two other persons were also previously tapped by the administration to serve as acting DPS commissioner.

FIRE DAMAGE JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Attorney Michael Dotts inspect the burned documents and other materials inside the Law Offices of O'Connor Berman Dotts & Banes on the second Floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe. The fire is believed to have started early Sunday morning.

10 bands competing in Saipan Summer Jam

The slate is complete. Ten bands will soon compete in the biggest gig of the year—*Beach Road Magazine's* Saipan Summer Jam on Aug. 24 from 4pm to 9pm at Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V.

"We were still getting phone inquiries but we had to stop at 10 to make the event more organized. We have one band on the waiting list," Susan Marchitti, *Beach Road Magazine* account manager said.

The bands joining the Saipan Summer Jam are Project X, Frozen Nipple, Rated R, Fritada, Past & Present, J2, D is for Dangerous, High Pitch, Channel B and Burning Bush.

Admission is $5 and includes a drink. Tickets are available at the *Beach Road Magazine* office located on the second floor of the Transpac Business Center on Middle Road in Gualo Rai. Tickets will also be available at Club V on the day of the event.

"Five dollars to see 10 bands perform is a fair deal," Marchitti said.

Text voting, which comprises 20% of the total score for each band, opened at 8am on August 1 and will close at 8pm on August 24, Marchitti said.

To vote for your choice, simply text the band's name and send it to their corresponding four-digit numeric text code using your PTI mobile. A profile of each of the bands and their numeric text codes are in the August edition of *Beach Road Magazine*. PTI will charge 10 cents per text vote to all subscribers regardless of plan.

Cash prizes await the winners who will also get a chance to perform at Palms Resort Saipan's "Back-to-School Summer Bash" on Aug. 30. ***(PR)***

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P.O. Box Mailex 83 Box 10005
Saipan, MP
Telephone No. 288-1237

pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The Petition To Appoint General Guardianship For:	**FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0419**
Francis Bisanen Jr. Minor Child By:	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
Marciala R. Bisanen Petitioner	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on August 11, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom **205**, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 28th day of July, 2008.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, August 6, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the Napu Room, Pacific Islands Club, San Antonio, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments [1]

III. New Business
- a. Interviews of COE applicants

IV. Executive Session [2]

V. Miscellaneous Matters

VI. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

VII. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

HS teacher, Davis, joins delegate race

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An eighth candidate has formally filed his bid for congressional delegate.

John Davis, a high school teacher and a Vietnam War veteran, filed paperwork with the Commonwealth Election Commission yesterday. He is running as an independent candidate.

He will face at least seven opponents in the increasingly crowded race to become the Northern Marianas' first-ever non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Davis

Davis promises to bring integrity into the federal office. He also vows to deviate from the traditional kind of politics, which, he says, got the Commonwealth into its current economic crisis.

"The same people who put us in this predicament are the same people who want to go and represent us in Washington. I think enough is enough. We need someone who will fight for the CNMI, not for their own pocketbooks or for their own prestige or glory," said Davis, who moved from the mainland United States to Saipan 22 years ago to help with the opening of the Commonwealth Health Center.

If elected delegate, Davis said, he will push for efforts to make the Commonwealth more self-sufficient, rather than dependent on federal handouts and foreign investors, "who take more money out than they ever bring in."

He also said he will run his campaign differently from traditional politicians. "I'm not going to pay for any picnic tables or tents. I'm not going to get votes by paying for somebody's hospital bills or any of that nonsense. There won't be any people standing out on the side of the road, impeding traffic and getting in the way. And I will not be putting up those billboards that make our island ugly every time we have an election. Just name recognition isn't going to be enough this time. The candidates, as far as I'm concerned, will have to address the needs of the people of the CNMI. I'm going to talk to people as much as possible," he said.

The other candidates running for delegate are Resident Rep. Pete A. Tenorio of the NMI Republican Party, former Sen. David Cing of the NMI Democratic Party, television talk show host John Oliver Gonzales, retired Judge Juan Lizama, businessman Chong Won,, former Election Commission executive director Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan, and Sen. Luis Crisostimo.

The Election Commission will accept candidacy documents until 4:30pm tomorrow, Aug. 6, 2008. The election is on Nov. 4, 2008.

SANPO-EN PILGRIMAGE
Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela poses with Buddhist priest Kayaki Kansho and 30 Japanese students during the 30th Anniversary of Sanpo-en memorial ceremony at the Sanpo-en Peace Monument at Banzai Cliff on Marpi. The students are from Osaka, Kyushu, Nagano and Tokyo. With them are 12 chaperones.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

SSHS registration

All students that have been evaluated and have graduated from Hopwood are required to still required to register. No student is officially enrolled without the submission of a registration form by a parent or legal guardian.

Registration forms can be picked up from the SSHS Office and should be submitted by August 22, 2008, for enrollment.

All returning students must return all textbooks and settle all obligations to the school before class schedule may be picked up.

Schedules can be picked up at the Counseling Office during the following times:

■ Seniors (12th)
Sept. 2, 2008
8am to 1pm

■ Juniors (11th)
Sept. 3, 2008
8am to 1pm

■ Sophomores (10th)
Sept. 4, 2008
8am to 1pm

New student orientation and class schedules can be picked up Sept. 5, 2008, between 9am and 11am. All transfers and new students are required to attend the orientation with their parents or legal guardians. Schedules will be passed out after orientation.

If you have any questions about registration or orientation, call 664-4000 or 237-3710. ***(PR)***

'No-budget, no-govt' bill passes Legislature

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Legislature has approved a proposed constitutional amendment requiring the government to shut down whenever there is a budget impasse.

The Senate voted unanimously to approve a legislative initiative removing a constitutional provision that currently allows government operations to continue even if an annual budget appropriation is not enacted.

The initiative, which previously cleared the House of Representatives, will become law once ratified by a majority of the voters in a general election.

Proponents of the bill believe that a government shutdown provision will force the lawmakers and the governor to seriously review and enact a balanced budget on time. The initiative provides an exemption from the shutdown for critical services such as health and safety.

Over the past years, the CNMI government has enacted an average of one budget every four years-usually at the beginning of a governor's term. In the years that no appropriation was passed, the government continued to operate under the last enacted budget. With the government's dwindling resources, the "continuing resolution" practice has proven problematic. Because the previous fiscal year's revenue collection is almost always higher than that of the current fiscal year, deficits have accumulated.

At present, the CNMI government has accrued a deficit of over $170 million.

"There are many costs associated with the failure to enact a budget [and those include] increased operational costs, the inability to deal with contractual obligations, and increased deficit spending resulting from working at the previous year's spending levels. Other incalculable costs include the decline in public confidence in public officials, damage to the image of the Commonwealth government, and a poor credit rating," states the initiative.

It remains unclear whether initiatives will make it to the ballot this November. The House of Representatives previously passed a bill allowing initiatives on the ballot, but the Senate reversed that provision by defining the Nov. 4, 2008 delegate election as a special election.

The Constitution requires that initiatives to amend the Constitution or a general law be placed on the ballot at a "regular general election." The current definition of a "regular general election" only includes elections held in odd-numbered years on the first Saturday of November.

House panel studies proportionate pensions

The House of Representatives has formed a special committee to study legislation that would allow the NMI Retirement Fund to dole out pension based on what the government has contributed for the retiree.

Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero will head the committee, with Reps. Heinz Hofschneider, Oscar Babauta, Justo Quitugua, and Ralph Anthony Torres serving as members.

The committee is tasked to consult with the Retirement Fund and relevant agencies, and report to the full House within two weeks.

The Lower House created the committee after failing to reach an agreement on the Senate-passed bill, which would allow the Retirement Fund to pay new retirees less than their full pension.

The legislation is designed to allow eligible government employees to retire without causing financial burden to the pension agency, which has not been receiving payments from the central government. Currently, the Retirement Fund is not processing new retirement applications at all.

Hofschneider, one of the lawmakers who oppose the bill, said that approving the measure is tantamount to validating the government's "refusal" to pay retirement contributions to the Fund. He said that, instead of passing the bill, the Legislature should pass a budget fully funding the government's retirement costs.

But the bill's proponents, such as Rep. Diego Benavente, said that a fraction of the pension is better than nothing at all. "The situation we have here is real. The government does not have the money for pension contributions. As a result, government employees who are due for retirement cannot retire. This legislation will allow those employees to get something," Benavente said.

The bill proposes to amend Public Law 15-61, which specifically prohibits the Retirement Fund from applying the proportionate pension scheme.

The CNMI government has stopped remitting employer contributions to the Fund since March 2006. Prior to that, the government had been paying only part of its contributions. According to the Retirement Fund, as of Sept. 30, 2007, the CNMI government owed the pension program $132 million in employer contributions, excluding penalties and interest. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

DEQ needs help locating leaking storage tanks

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Division of Environmental Quality is asking community members, especially those who have lived in the CNMI for several decades, to help pinpoint where leaking underground storage tanks might be located.

At a public meeting Monday, Bill Concepcion, of Duenas & Associates, Inc., who is conducting the site survey, shared the locations and information of tanks he and his co-workers have been able to find. But they need more help from community members, he said.

"We need to check the minds of all the people to see if they recall any buried tanks," Concepcion said.

Using georeference coordinates from maps dating back as early as 1944, Concepcion and his colleagues have been able to locate some underground tanks, he said.

There was a Japanese radio station where Oleai Elementary currently sits, he said. Radio stations usually have a power generator supply.

Saipan Community School is the location where many locals would dig up cans of "blue gas" to use as fuel for their cars, Concepcion said. The fuel had been used as aviation fuel before the war.

"They say the blue gas was left by the Japanese in drums," he said.

Concepcion said there is also evidence Joeten in Susupe currently sits on a tank.

"If you look at the parking lot, you can see the evidence of a tank," he said. "It looks like cement was just poured over it."

DEQ will continue to hold meetings to try to find out from community members what they remember, Concepcion said.

There are two more meetings this week:

■ Tinian—Thursday, Aug. 7 at 11am in the Conference room of the Office of the Mayor

■ Rota—Friday, Aug. 8 at 11am in the Conference room of the Office of the Mayor.

Tinian peace ceremony marks atomic bombing

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

CNMI residents will gather with students from Japan Wednesday for the 6th annual Tinian Nagasaki Hiroshima Peace Ceremony in order to remember the island's role in the 1945 atomic bombing of the Japanese cities.

Aug. 6 marks the 53rd anniversary of the B-29 *Enola Gay* taking off from Tinian before the bomb Little Boy was dropped on Hiroshima

"It's to remember the world-shaking event," organizer James Mediola, Jr., said.

He said the ceremony acts as a learning and sharing experience between the United States and Japan.

"So we never repeat the atrocity," he said. "Not just atomic missions, but all wartime causalities are an atrocity, and warfare in general."

Although Tinian residents did not have a role in the bombing, they can still help bring peace, he said.

"Perhaps since Tinian has a historical role in the atomic missions, perhaps we can promote that notoriety for peace," he added.

Fourteen students from Koryo High School in Hiroshima, who happened to be visiting the island, will perform during the peace ceremony, Mendiola said.

"I'm pretty sure that's going to be something special for the community," Mendiola added.

The event schedule is as follows:

Sounding of the Sirens Ceremony

Location: Children's Peace Monument, Taga Park—Tinian

9:05am--Opening Remarks

9:15am–Sounding of Emergency Sirens and Moment of Silence (1 min. 30 sec.)

9:18am–Multi-faith Prayer for Peace

Candlelight Vigil Ceremony

Location: Children's Peace Monument, Taga Park—Tinian

7:00pm–Opening Remarks

7:05pm–Lighting of Candles

7:10pm–Children's Choir Performance "Imagine"

7:15pm–Special Performance Hiroshima Koryo High School

7:20pm–Special Performance "One" written by U2 and performed by Local Artists

7:25pm–Closing

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students from Tinian Junior Senior High School and other members of the Tinian community pose for a souvenir picture after cleaning up the children's memorial grounds for the 6th Annual Tinian Nagasaki Hiroshima Peace Ceremony.

Tinian High students volunteer for peace

Students from Tinian Junior Senior High School and other members of the Tinian community spent the last two weeks working to prepare the children's memorial grounds for the 6th Annual Tinian Nagasaki Hiroshima Peace Ceremony.

Students from the Tinian High School Student Government, Japan Club, and Young Writers Club have given up their weekends by helping paint and landscape the monument area before the Aug. 6 peace ceremony.

The hardworking students that volunteered their time include Janessa Aquino, Nisha Shrestha, Billy Manglona, Monica Manglona, Alisha Shrestha, Terilyn Taisacan, Virginia Wedding, and Sheila Palacios.

Rep. Edwin P. Aldan and Sen. Henry H. Hofschneider donated landscaping sheets and paint to help prepare the monument area. Members of the business community also pitched in with Don Power from Tinian Ice and Water and Susan Cruz of Susan's Boutique lending a hand, while Fleming's Hotel and Restaurant provided refreshments.

Volunteers Ann Marie Hocog and sister Jane Castro have also dedicated valuable time by working to create candleholders for this year's candlelight vigil scheduled for the evening of Aug. 6.

The organizers of the 6th Annual Tinian Nagasaki Hiroshima Peace Ceremony expressed gratitude to all the volunteers who have helped at the peace ceremony site. Organizers are inviting all interested members of the community to the Sounding of the Sirens Ceremony at 8:50am and the Candlelight Vigil at 6:50pm on Wednesday, Aug. 6. ***(PR)***

IConnect selects 120 finalists for $100K promo

TAMUNING, Guam— IConnect has selected the 120 weekly-drawn finalists that will advance to the final drawing for a chance to win $100,000 starting at 6pm Friday, Aug. 8, at the Micronesia Mall Center Court starting at 6pm.

IConnect's 8th anniversary $100,000 "Chance to Win" promotion started June 13 and concluded Aug. 1. IConnect customers received one entry form with every $10 purchase. Fifteen weekly winners were selected for eight consecutive weeks. "The promotion has been a lot of fun for our staff and was very well received by our customers," said Matt Giger, vice president of IConnect.

IConnect is celebrating its 8th anniversary on Guam. It provides advanced "Push-2-Talk" radio & cellular communications services to the islands' businesses and residents. ***(PR)***

3,000 Minute Plan
with UNLIMITED PUSH-TO-TALK
Only $59.99/mo
i415
FREE
i290
Only
$99
i335
Only
$139
New
i570
Only
$169
3,000 Minute Plan includes:
3,000 CELLULAR MINUTES • UNLIMITED PUSH-TO-TALK • FREE 180 local SMS • Rates per SMS: Guam & Saipan at 5¢ /SMS, Philippines at 5¢ /SMS, National (US, Alaska & Hawaii) at 10¢ /SMS, International at 12¢ /SMS • Calls to continental US, Hawaii & Alaska at 5¢ /min. • Calls to the Philippines at 25¢ /min. • Free Unlimited Webtext • Guam – CNMI coverage • Excess local minute charge at 20¢ /min. • 24 month contract • Prices do not include applicable local and federal taxes and fees • 3,000 Minute Plan is available for Guam and the CNMI • Terms and conditions apply.
Saipan-Guam Office 888.8888 I iconnectsaipan.com
iCONNECT

Hawaii tourism in steep decline

June visitor count drops 14 percent

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Visitor arrivals to Hawaii in June sank 14.2 percent compared to the same month last year.

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin reports around 580,000 visitors travelled to Hawaii in June, the biggest monthly decline in five years.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority says visitor spending sank 13.5 percent in June, compared to the same month last year.

The authority, which oversees official tourism planning efforts for Hawaii, is considering spending 6.5 million US dollars on marketing to boost the state's sagging visitor industry.

The newspaper says the latest figures are particularly worrisome, as June marks the start of Hawaii's major tourism season, which runs through August.

Hawaii has been hard hit by rising fuel prices, which increase the cost of travel, and weakening consumer confidence in the United States.

Convicted Tahiti mayor in new investigation

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—The mayor of Mahina on the island of Tahiti in French Polynesia, Emile Vernaudon, who made history by being elected while in jail, may lose his office after his campaign accounts were rejected.

The French accounts office has referred questions about the contributions to a Tahiti court which could lead to fresh elections for the mayoralty, held by Vernaudon since the 1970's.

He was re-elected in March, despite being in prison, as part of an on going investigation into alleged fraud and theft during his time as government minister.

The Mahina council installed him in office by placing a ribbon around his photograph in the mayor's chair.

However, his four months in jail prevented him from possible re-election as an assembly member in February.

His wife stood for the assembly seat instead and was elected to join the ruling coalition of Gaston Tong Sang.

In April, just days after leaving prison, the appeal court in Tahiti gave him a suspended one-year jail sentence and a fine of 40,000 US dollars as well as depriving him of his civic rights for a year for his role in a corrupt land deal.

The ruling is being appealed in Paris.

French Polynesia arrivals down 12 pct.

SUVA, Fiji (Oceania Flash/PIR)—French Polynesia's tourism is increasingly concerned at a downward trend which has shown that for the month of June this year, arrivals have dropped some 11.8 percent compared to the same month last year.

Latest statistics published earlier this week by French Polynesia's statistical institute ISPF show, over the same period, a significant drop in French Polynesia's main tourism source markets, such as the United States (24.9 percent).

American visitors normally represent close to a third of French Polynesia's tourism arrivals.

4,552 American visitors came to French Polynesia in June this year, compared to 6,058 in June last year.

The drop was perceived a being a direct result of a lesser purchasing power from the US dollar, in terms of exchange rate.

But a global rise in fuel costs, and therefore of plane ticket prices, is also regarded as a contributing factor for the most distant tourism source markets.

European visitors were also fewer to visit in June this year (-3.4 per cent compared to June 2007).

But Japanese visitors numbers have not decreased but on the contrary have slightly increased by just over 8.5 percent during the same period, statistics showed.

Cumulated figures to June 30, 2008 for the first half of this year also confirm the downward trend for French Polynesia's tourism industry: whereas there were some 103,211 visitors during the first half of 2007, there were only 94,706 during the first six months of this year.

The latest statistics come days after French Secretary of State for Overseas territories, Yves Jégo, officially opened a new five-star "Four Seasons" resort on French Polynesia's island of Bora Bora.

New Chairman, financial woes for Air Tahiti Nui

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors of French Polynesia's international flag carrier Air Tahiti Nui (ATN) has late last week appointed a new Executive Chairman to replace outgoing Geffry Salmon.

He is Christian Vernaudon and his main task will be to provide leadership to devise and implement a new strategy in order to reduce ATN's recurrent deficit and bring the company back to some form of financial balance.

French Polynesia's local government is the ain shareholder for the company, which this year is also celebrating its tenth anniversary.

Solomon Airlines hikes air fares

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Star/PIR)—Solomon Airlines has announced an airfare increase of 19 percent on all international and domestic fares. The increase will be effective immediately for travel on or after 19 August.

This is on the back of continued high prices for oil/jet fuel as well as costs increases for parts and the continued weak Solomon Dollar.

The increases were approved by ATLA (the Air Transport Licensing Authority). Solomon Airlines operates Brisbane-Honiara-Brisbane jet flights as well as code shared flights to Fiji with Air Niugini and Air Pacific. Its domestic service fleet of three Twin Otters and a Britten Norman Islander fly throughout the country.

Some two months ago, the airline advised of its long awaited rise in fuel surcharges. This was just to play catch up games with higher jet fuel prices, Solomon Airlines said in a statement Friday.

Since then, prices have continued to remain abnormally high to the extent of effecting all airline operations, it said. In its submission to ATLA, Solomon Airlines pointed out the huge disparity within the region of domestic airfares.

It also pointed to the continued increases submitted by regional and international airlines regarding increases in airfares and fuel surcharges. The statement said: "It has been four years since the last airfare increase (not referring to fuel surcharges) and the aviation arena has changed dramatically since then.

"We are far behind in our recoveries to maintain some sort of parity within the region and also to ensure viability is brought back into the business of operating an airline.

"The fact that we understand there may be an immediate downturn in travel due to these increases and our sense of concern for the average Solomon Islander, who can ill afford all the current increased woes to survive in our economy, has played a part in our delay in applying these increases.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

British royalty visit Solomons

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are in the Solomon Islands after arriving at Honiara international airport on Sunday afternoon. The Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation reports security was tight for the arrival, with the police and members of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands on duty. The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester will today attend an Ecumenical Church Service of thanks for thirty years of independence. They will also visit the Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited, the RAMSI Camp at the Guadalcanal Beach Resort and King George Sixth School. The Duke will address Solomon Islands Parliament today.

Australia's aid to Nauru criticized

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—An Australian academic says that Canberra is deluding itself if it thinks its new MOU with Nauru will help the small island nation's people and economy. The MOU pledges around 27 million US dollars in continuing support for Nauru after the recent closure of Canberra's detention processing camps on the island which for years helped prop up Nauru's economy. But Professor Helen Hughes from the think tank the Australian Centre for Independent Studies feels the MOU does little to properly address the education and public sector capacity problems which have left Nauru a veritable beggar state. She says that there's nothing in the MOU to stop Nauruans having to leave Nauru.

Pacific Blue seeks third flight to Cooks

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands (Cook Islands News/PIR)—Cook Islands Tourism chief executive John Dean announced yesterday that Pacific Blue airline has asked for approval to operate a third flight to Rarotonga, starting in Melbourne and flying through Auckland. Dean says the flight could start as early as mid-September but no dates have been set yet. Pacific Blue currently offers a B737-800 Brisbane-Auckland-Rarotonga service twice a week.

Uncollected trash smells up Majuro

MAJURO, Marshall Islands (Yokwe Online/PIR)—In July of 2008, more trash is collecting throughout Majuro, rather than being collected. It's not this month only, say concerned Majuro residents, who are sick of the smell, the mess, and hazardous wastes. In spite of thousands spent to develop waste management plans, an upgraded dump operation, and recycling efforts, there has yet to be a proper, consistent collection and disposal on Majuro Atoll and for the rest of the Marshall Islands. "Majuro Atoll Waste Company is not in crisis, Majuro is," said a MAWC board member, citing problems with deteriorating bins and machinery.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

August 05, 1999

PSS gets $30M for CIP projects

An appropriation measure setting aside nearly $30 million in fresh funds for various infrastructure projects of the Public School System was signed into law yesterday, a week after the Legislature acted swiftly on the request of the Board of Education. Despite objections to two key provisions, acting Gov. Jesus R. Sablan said he approved the proposal in order to expedite these critical projects for the public schools.

Chamber opposes wage hike

Majority of the members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce who attended yesterday's regular monthly were against any move that would raise the minimum wage. Only two were in favor of increasing the present $3.05 hourly wage, while two were indifferent on the issue.

DOLI exempts garment firms from PROC ban

The Department of Labor and Immigration has issued another memorandum to clarify an earlier order banning entry of workers and visitors from mainland China, exempting factories belonging to the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association. Addressed to all airlines, immigration and labor offices and ports of entry of the CNMI, the memorandum is the third in a week from the department, following claims by some sectors that nationals from the People's Republic of China are eligible to seek asylum here.

August 05, 2002

Emergency powers invoked

Faced with a projected $18 million deficit, acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente has invoked his emergency powers under the Planning and Budgeting Act to freeze and impound all government funds, including that of the Legislature, the Judiciary and municipalities. Benavente said this decision stems from the refusal of the House of Representatives to grant the Babauta administration's request to allow it to go beyond the $193 million budget level set for Fiscal Year 2002.

Senate to reconsider request?

If it is still relevant and possible, the Senate is considering passing a measure that would grant Gov. Juan N. Babauta what he had asked the House of Representatives for: a waiver on the penalty provision of the Planning and Budgeting Act so it could go beyond the $193 million spending limit. This comes even as the Babauta administration remains waiting for the Legislature to approve the impoundment of government funds, as declared by acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente Friday in response to the lower chamber's refusal to grant the administration's request.

Public reaction mixed on emergency power

Acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente's decision to invoke his emergency power to impound the contents of the Commonwealth's coffers got mixed reactions from the public, including some who barely had an idea what the politico-legal term meant. This was the first time that the CNMI government invoked that power in recent years, which would explain why the term Òemergency impoundmentÓ was so unfamiliar to some.

August 05, 2003

Manglona, Quitugua bolt out of GOP

Senate president Paul Manglona of the ruling Republican Party has decided to run independently, together with Rota Rep. Daniel Quitugua, following the Rota-Republican Party's exclusion of Quitugua's name from its official mid-term election lineup. The two independent candidates beat yesterday's 4:30pm deadline set by the Commission of Elections for filing candidacies.

Filipinos without US visa barred from using Guam airport as layover point

The Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed yesterday that close monitoring of passengers without U.S. visas entering the Northern Marianas would be strictly implemented to determine how the suspension of Transit Without Visa and International-To-International programs would affect Saipan as tourist destination. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said the ports authority would also clarify with the Department of Homeland Security the status of the CNMI-Guam hubbing arrangement since it would affect Saipan-bound passengers.

NCLEX examiners first to take impact of airport policy change

Complaints mounted yesterday from Saipan-bound passengers after the federal government enforced the suspension of the Tourist Without Visa and International-To-International programs that prohibit non-U.S. visa travelers, including those from the Philippines, to transit via Guam. Majority of the complaints came from families of Filipino workers on Saipan and nurses who are scheduled to take the National Council Licensure Examination this week.

Island Snapshots

MONTHLY CLEANUP CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteers from Awao Odori Dance Group, Kinpachi Restaurant, Paseo de Mariana Promoters, Friends of the Mariana Islands, and Pew Environment Group at the monthly cleanup of the Garapan Tourist District.

YOUTHFUL ACTIVISM JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

U.S. citizen children of nonresident workers gather for a photo shortly after a meeting with human rights advocate Wendy Doromal at the Kilili Beach pavilion late Wednesday afternoon.

HOUSE SESSION JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Edward T. Salas, Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb and Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho read a bill during a session break at the House Chamber on Capital Hill.

'ULTIMATE FIGHTERS' JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

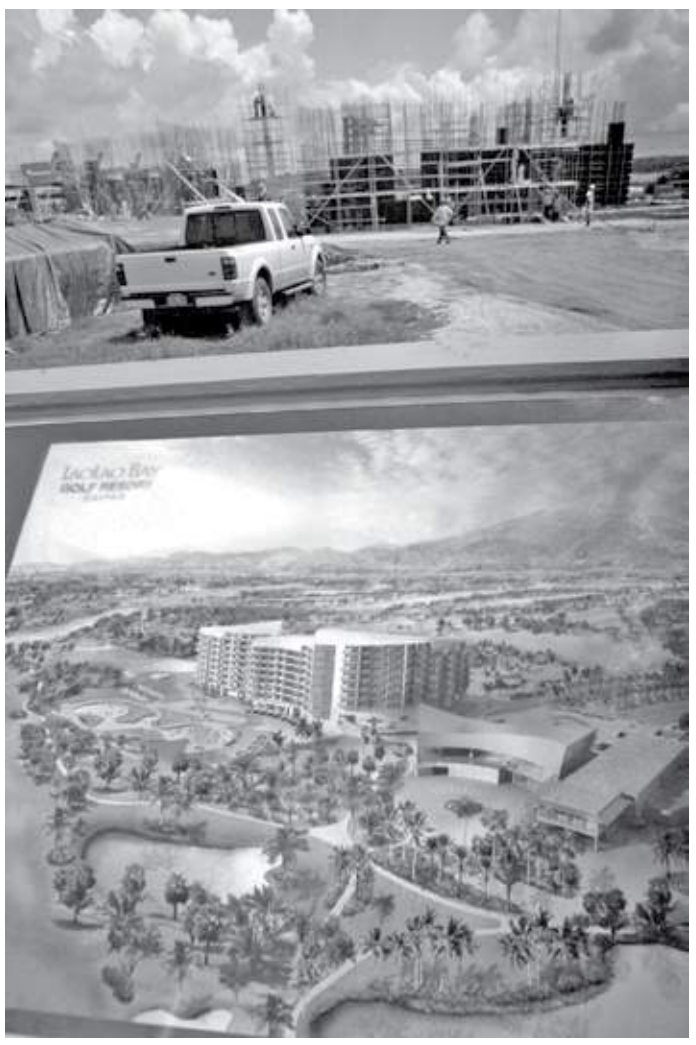
PTI staff pose for a photo with Ultimate Fighting Championship veteran Kimo Leopoldo shortly after Kimo's autograph signing at the PTI's new Wireless Express Center at the TSL Plaza in Garapan Thursday night.

Ultimate Fighting Championship veteran Kimo Leopoldo and Kelvin "The Big Hit" Fitial pose with their little fans during their autograph signing at the PTI's new Wireless Express Center at the TSL Plaza in Garapan Thursday night.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

NEW SOLDIER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PFC Kristina S. Guerrero, shown here with her mother, Connie Nakamura, in Fort Lewis, Missouri, recently graduated from the U.S. Army's basic training. Her father, Joseph Lee Guerrero, said that Kristina decided to join the armed services because "she wanted to protect every U.S. citizen from enemies that do not see what true freedom stands for."



LAOLAO PROJECT

Workers are seen toiling on the construction site of the Golftel project at the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort that is being touted to make Saipan "the premier golf destination in the Pacific."

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

ISLAND VISITOR

Gorilla Warfare Productions, Inc.'s mainland promoter Bobby Gamboa with Tom Salas inside the Hawaiian Bar and Grill in Garapan.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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...AND I SUPPOSE THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE GOING TO CLAIM THIS IS PART OF MY LEGACY, TOO...
RECORD DEFICIT
7/08
RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH
BROOKINS

EDITORIAL

China's model for a 21st-century police state

When it was competing to host the 2008 Olympics, China told the world that it would do so as a modernizing power that would use the Games to expand freedom of expression and "benefit the further development of our human rights cause," as the mayor of Beijing put it. The China that is emerging before Friday's opening ceremonies is something entirely different: an unapologetic autocracy that censors the Internet, imprisons nonviolent domestic critics and bulldozes anything or anyone deemed to be in the way of a state-orchestrated showcase.

No one doubts that China is a far freer country for most of its citizens today than during the dark days of Mao and the Cultural Revolution. Nor did anyone expect China to transform itself into a democracy in time for the Games, as South Korea did 20 years ago. But Beijing itself nourished hopes of a loosening of political controls and promised the International Olympic Committee that it would allow full media freedom. Instead, as a host of Western human rights groups and Chinese activists has documented, the regime has moved in the opposite direction. In the run-up to the Olympics it has imprisoned MORE activists, cracked down harder in Tibet, denied visas to foreigners who might criticize its policies, and detained or expelled thousands of citizens considered embarrassing to the host city—such as petitioners who traveled to Beijing to appeal against government abuses.

When the first reporters arrived at the Olympic media center last week, they found that access to Internet sites for a wide range of sponsors—from Western news and human rights organizations to dissident Chinese groups—had been blocked, in blatant violation of China's promise and that of IOC President Jacques Rogge. On Friday some access was restored, mostly to Western sites. But senior Chinese officials were unapologetic about their behavior. In a scripted meeting with selected journalists President Hu Jintao ignored a direct question about human rights. He deplored "politicizing the Olympic Games" even as he described them as validating "the world's trust in China" and "China's contribution to the world." Mr. Hu described China as a "socialist democracy"; his Olympic model of autocracy will hearten the African and Asian dictatorships to which China sells weapons and which it shields from international sanctions.

Sadly, much of the democratic world has chosen not to challenge this bold assertiveness by the first non-democratic country to host the Olympics since 1980. Most of the free world boycotted the Soviet-sponsored Moscow Games. But Western leaders, including President Bush, will pour into Beijing for Friday's opening ceremonies. Mr. Rogge's IOC, which tried to single out and exclude Iraq from these Olympics, has meekly gone along with Beijing's violation of its promises. An official said that the IOC agreed to allow the censorship of Internet sites "that were not considered Games-related."

After months of insisting that he would attend the Olympics strictly as a sports fan, Mr. Bush belatedly invited several Chinese human rights activists to the White House last week. But the president quickly balanced that worthy gesture with an interview with state-controlled Chinese media in which he heaped praise on Mr. Hu and said, "I have a positive view of China's rise." Does the president really have no objection to a new world power committed to state censorship, the persecution of peaceful dissent and the denial of basic rights to religious believers and ethnic minorities? If he does object, he ought to make that clear to the Chinese people and to the world, while he is in Beijing.

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Riding up the Hill

Hell's Coconuts

Motorcycle clubs don't have the best reputations. What with sex and violence biker movies starting in the '50s and hitting a real stride in the '70s and continuing to today, is it any wonder that popular culture sees the Harley rider as an anti-social and even criminal element. In these films, and there have been scores of them, nomadic groups of armed thugs do drugs, commit serious crimes and indulge in wanton revelry at every turn.

There may well be (or once have been) groups that deserved such a reputation but today's biker, individually or in groups, tends to exhibit a quite different persona. At the annual gathering of the Harley tribe in Sturgis, South Dakota, you are far more likely to encounter a high-dollar lawyer or a successful middle-aged businessman robed in that biker jacket than you are to find a wandering misfit with a rap sheet. This year's rally to celebrate the Harley riding lifestyle is the 68th annual event and will play host to about a half million aficionados (as opposed to desperados).

Part of the reason for the move to "upscale" bikers is cost. These motorcycles don't come cheap and by the time you have bought one, customized it and outfitted it with the latest geegaws you have tens of thousands invested. While $15,000 might buy you a basic model, it takes 10 times that amount, $150,000, to ride one of the themed customs that come out of the top design shops around the country. For a hundred miles and more surrounding Sturgis the air resounds with the ring of cash registers working overtime during rally week. Riders spend literally millions on entertainment, lodging, bike stuff and biker stuff. It takes a fair amount of cash to attend the rally and it takes a lot of the green stuff to ride a Harley as a hobby, even if you stay in your own hometown.

Here on Saipan we have a group called the Taga Riders, composed of motorcyclists from an array of different backgrounds. The club is small as biker groups go, numbering maybe 20 or so. Don't expect to see them ravaging a local malt shop, terrorizing the womenfolk or robbing the Bank of Guam, however. These guys and gals will be found gathering toys for an annual toys for tots Christmas event, or securing donations for the needy at the CHC hospital, helping the *man'amko* or doing lots of other positive community services they volunteer for each year. You will see them riding proudly at the Liberation Day parade and you will see them around the island from time to time just riding for fun.

The Taga Riders spend part of their Sundays cruising up the sun dappled shady roads in Marpi or gliding the curves on Isa Drive (cross island road). You can see them stopped to enjoy a cold refreshment at one or more local watering holes on any given Sunday afternoon. You can hear the distinctive sound as their Harleys rumble past your village on their way to enjoy the day with the wind blowing their hair and the sights, sounds and smells of Saipan Island droning past them.

They say you can always tell a happy Harley rider by the bugs on their teeth. This year from Aug. 4 through the 10th in Sturgis there will be plenty of need for toothpicks if the joyous gatherings of years past are any indication. While our club members here on Saipan won't have the opportunity to ride to Sturgis (unless they are sporting around on the new submarine version of the Electra Glide) they will be there in spirit, I'm sure.

So smile, honk and wave at the bikers you see as they burble past your windshield. Even if they are off to work instead of riding for fun, you will probably see a great big smile on their faces as they ride the roads of Saipan Island. There are a couple of places to rent bikes, big and small, in Garapan so that rider you smile and wave at just might be a tourist enjoying our fair island by touring on two wheels. They like to be waved at, too, so indulge yourself in a friendly gesture of welcome if you please.

■ ■ ■ ■

A cut above

I see where Washington Rep. Pete Tenorio and Sen. Luis Crisostimo both turned in their petitions and other paperwork to be certified candidates for the watching-but-unable-to-vote position of non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress last Friday. I also noticed that neither man resigned their current elected office. The ranks of those coveting the $170,000 per year job are swelling and now include the above two plus John Gonzales, Juan Lizama, Chong Won, David Cing, John Davis and Gregorio Sablan. The others who held public office or government jobs have resigned as the law stipulates. Are Messrs Tenorio and Crisostimo above the law or are they reading a different rulebook?

There is still a bit of time before the Aug. 6 deadline for turning the official documents in to the Election Commission office on Capital Hill so don't be surprised if another candidate or two shows up on the doorstep wanting to get in on the largesse available to congressional delegates. Can we get to 10?

■ ■ ■ ■

Quote of the Week: Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for law.

—Louis D. Brandeis, lawyer, judge, and writer (1856-1941)

SOUR GRAPES

BRUCE A. BATEMAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bruce A. Bateman writes Sour Grapes when the moon is full and the mood strikes. Stay tuned for each exciting episode. Yes, he is opinionated. bbateman@pticom.com

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Senator is left out in the cold

By MICHAEL CAREY
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—A federal grand jury in Washington indicted Republican Sen. Ted Stevens on corruption charges Tuesday last week. The reaction in Alaska, four time zones away, was not so much "why?" as "why now?" After all, government prosecutors have been discussing the possibility for more than a year, and many Alaskans assumed that there would be no indictment in the run-up to the state's Aug. 26 GOP primary.

The FBI raided the Girdwood home of Alaska's senior senator in summer 2007. His colleague, Rep. Don Young, is under investigation. The senator's son, former state Sen. Ben Stevens, is under investigation. A gaggle of state legislators, lobbyists and businessmen have been arrested and either pleaded guilty to corruption or been convicted at trial.

So the fitting room for new prison suits is crowded, and Alaskans are wondering if the 84-year-old Stevens, whom constituents had taken to calling "senator for life," will be joining those getting measured.

That doesn't mean he won't win the GOP primary. His six opponents are little known, and after all, Ted Stevens is a living legend.

Outside—as Alaskans call the rest of the United States—Stevens is known for supporting the "bridge to nowhere," calling the Internet "a series of tubes" and throwing tantrums on the Senate floor when he doesn't get his way. Here, he is known as the purveyor of endless federal financial largesse—billions of dollars, not mere millions—and for his role in shaping virtually every federal policy affecting his state for the last four decades.

In Alaska, his fingerprints are like the snow in winter—everywhere. His ability to deliver for his constituents has made him so popular that he has not had a serious election challenge since the early 1970s.

So Alaskans appreciate what Stevens has done for them, and their gratitude may be enough to propel him to victory in the Republican primary.

But not to victory in November—not when the Democrats are about to nominate a man who stands in almost perfect contrast to him, Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich.

Begich, 46, is a polished performer who has built a statewide reputation as an effective moderate. Politics is in his blood; he's the son of former Rep. Nick Begich, who disappeared in a 1972 plane crash while campaigning for re-election. Mark Begich is well-funded, and it's easy to imagine the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee sending him gunnysacks full of money now that Stevens has been indicted. The mayor's critics have complained about a couple of real estate deals he made, but their complaints have been largely ignored by the voters.

Begich's campaign has been all about tomorrow: Look what I can do for you. Stevens' campaign has been all about the past: Look what I have done for you.

But Stevens' recent past has been all about the corruption investigation and the legislative indictments and convictions that have engulfed prominent figures in the state Capitol. Moreover, Ben Stevens probably made himself the most unpopular public figure in the state before this latest investigation by shamelessly using his father's name and connections to make hundreds of thousands of dollars. Few Alaskans believe that he could have earned the money if he were anybody but Ted Stevens' boy.

The Ted Stevens story is a tale of overcoming adversity—as a child in a broken family in Indianapolis, a teen sent to live with relatives in Southern California, a young federal prosecutor in Fairbanks, and a U.S. Senate candidate in Anchorage.

In 1962, he ran for the Senate and was defeated in the general election. In 1968, he ran again and was defeated in the primary. His political career appeared to be over until Sen. Bob Bartlett died and Gov. Walter J. Hickel made him Bartlett's replacement.

In Washington, Stevens made himself indispensable to the 49th state, and in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, he was showered with honors and encomiums including "Alaskan of the Century," a title bestowed by one Anchorage civic group.

But that was the last century.

Once upon a time, a king asked the court philosopher, "Tell me something that is true today, will be true tomorrow and will be true for all time."

The philosopher replied, "Nothing lasts forever."

After serving 40 years in the Senate, Stevens is about to find out what the philosopher meant.

If Stevens had retired in 1996 or 2002, at the height of his power, it's unlikely that he now would be under investigation and indictment. He would have been a retired, revered figure; he would have avoided many decisions that drew the government's attention to him.

But he refused to accept retirement and soldiered on into a corruption scandal that is going to end his Washington career—in the election booth or at trial.

Carey is the former editorial page editor of the Anchorage Daily News.

Rhymes against the state

By PERRY LINK
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

In Imperial China, emperors and other high officials sometimes disguised themselves as commoners and mingled with the ordinary folk to learn what they were really thinking. For essentially the same purpose, a government office in the People's Republic now collects (ital) shunkouliu, (end ital) or "slippery jingles." These are rhythmic, often rhyming sayings full of clever wordplay. They are invariably satirical, and corruption is the most common target of their biting wit. The ditties are passed around by word of mouth (or, more recently, through text messages) and, like jokes in the West, are of unknown authorship. Uncensored and uncensorable, they are the freest and arguably the liveliest medium in China, even though the government has classified the poems in its own collection as state secrets.

A recent example, called the "The Four Clears and the Four Unclears," lampoons officials and officialdom:

Why hold a meeting? — Unclear
But who sits in what seat? — Very clear
Who brought which gifts? — Unclear
But who brought no gift? — Very clear
Whose work has been good? — Unclear
But who will be promoted? — Very clear
Who went to bed with the leader? — Unclear
But what was done there? — Very clear

A subgenre of shunkouliu makes fun of the "Four Basics," a government mantra that persists even though it is widely ignored in practice. The Four Basics are the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist Party leadership and Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Zedong-Thought. After the disastrous earthquake in Sichuan province last May, state-controlled media sought to show that the government was responding with the most modern equipment. But many people complained that its methods were primitive and that the shoddy construction of primary schools—due to corruption—had been a major factor in the loss of life. The following new list of "Four Basics" appeared:

Reinforcement bars basically absent
Transportation basically by foot
Communication basically by shouting
Excavation basically by hand

Not every Chinese, judging from the following piece, is thrilled by the approach of the Olympics:

The Olympics arrive
Beijing's alive!
The torch on display!
(The people make way.)
The foreigners are here
So the sky's suddenly clear!

And here's a new treat:
Fewer cars on the street!
Of course we are moved
That the food has improved.
And: no beggars, no riff-raff,
No petitions, you see,
No jails, no beatings
Just sweet "harmony!"
Who cares if the locals
Are kicked and repressed
So long as the world
Is duly impressed?
When the Olympics are done
We'll be back to square one:
Corruption and privilege
Won't that be fun?
Secrecy, strong-arming
Brainwashing, tax-farming
Mugging protesters
And hiding their tears;
Ruling by thugs,
But arresting "by law"
A new "Chinese model"
For many more years!

Link, a co-editor of The Tiananmen Papers, teaches at the University of California-Riverside.

Letters to the Editor

Is anyone out there listening?

This serves as a response to Fund chair Juan T. Guerrero's alleged statement that our politicians should stop using the pension system to win votes. Is anyone else out there listening, or is this the straw that should be breaking the proverbial camel's backs?

For years, the Fund has done nothing but sit back while this administration perpetually dishonors its promises to government employees to remit its fair share of their pension contributions. Recently, the Legislature enacted Public Law 16-2 to assist CUC and respond to the surging cost of fuel. The new law proposes to provide CUC with a fuel subsidy by suspending earmarked non-General Fund revenue and appropriating these funds to CUC so that it can then, presumably, pay for its fuel expenses. How the government plans to accomplish this miracle is, unfortunately, all too clear. Through Public Law 16-2, our elected representatives have approved of yet another reduction in the government's employer contribution to the Retirement Fund. Through Public Law 16-2, the Legislature has given the go-ahead for the government to reduce its share of defined benefit plan contributions to 11 percent of employee salaries for FY 2008.

To add insult to injury, the Act then requires the difference between the reduced contribution and that required to be made by law to be deposited into a special account within the general fund, so that CUC can pay its fuel expenses and further allow the government to deliver essential services. That's right: the Act empowers the government to use employee pension contribution's difference between the actuarially-calculated contribution rate and the new reduced rate to pay for CUC's fuel expenses, start-up costs and operating expenses for the Public Utilities Commission, and such additional reprogramming as the Governor thinks may be required by and for the public interest.

Wake up, government employees! Not only are you paying astronomical rates for utility services you do not receive on one end, but your pension contributions are now being diverted on the other end to the same bottomless pit that repeatedly fails to deliver. One can only wonder, in the face of four unscheduled blackouts in one day, how much longer it will take for the Fund to awaken from its deep sleep and take action on behalf of the retirees it owes a fiduciary duty to represent? Is anyone out there listening?

Phyllis Ain
via e-mail

Counting on our leaders

We rely on our leaders and they should know for a fact that they also rely on us for the trust and support they need from their people. Life is not easy these days. Every individual is suffering because of the economic depression we are all encountering each day that passes. Our leaders should know that what we really need from them is their help and cooperation, regardless if they are having some sort of misunderstandings within the Legislature. This is not about arguing and getting recognized; it is about helping people with their needs. Just remember that your every action is counted so please do what is best and keep in mind that we count on the hard work each of you leaders perform. We ask all our leaders to prove to us that you have the ability to work with one another. We are counting on you!

Abigail Manglona
Guam

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Slight chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Light south winds.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. South winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°

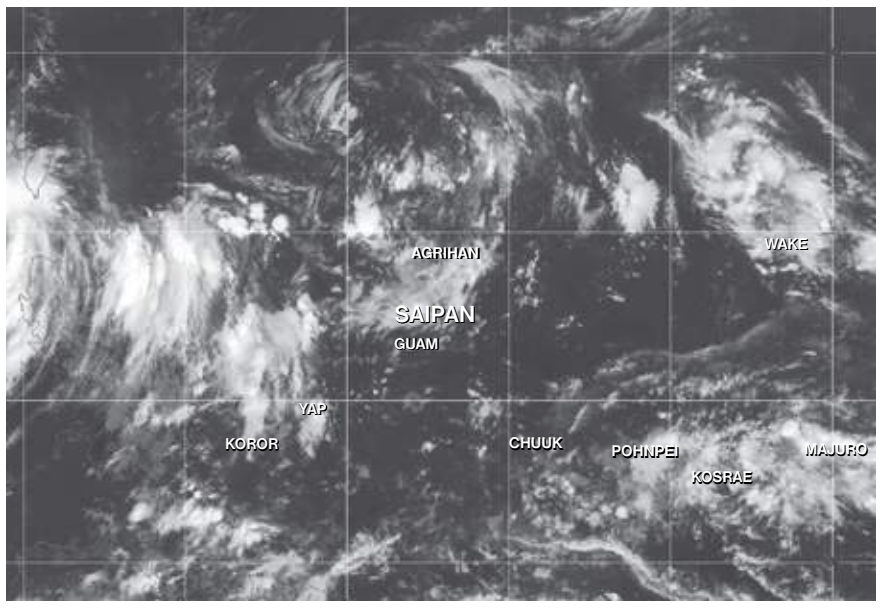
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼76
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼69
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲82	▼73

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲56	▼46
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲91	▼66
Hong Kong	Showers	▲84	▼76
Honolulu	Showers	▲84	▼76
London	Showers	▲75	▼59
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲84	▼66
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼77
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲61	▼48
Miami	Thundershowers	▲90	▼79
New York	Thundershowers	▲86	▼69
Osaka	Cloudy	▲89	▼75
Paris	Cloudy	▲73	▼62
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼75
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼67
Salem	Sunny	▲95	▼57
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲74	▼57
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼70
Tokyo	Showers	▲87	▼75
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲98	▼74

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Southwesterly convergence associated with low pressure centered near Iwo To at 26N143E is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Mariana Islands north of Saipan between 15N and 25N from 140E to 150E. A monsoon trough runs southeastward from 18N130E to 15N135E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring within an area bounded by a line extending from 20N130E to 15N130E to 8N135E to 8N139E to 15N139E to 22N136E back to 20N130E. This includes Yap and Koror. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Pohnpei, Kosrae and the Marshall Islands between 2N and 8N from 152E to beyond the dateline. An upper-level low centered northwest of Wake Island at 25N159E along with associated upper-divergence is enhancing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near and over Wake Island within an area bounded by a line extending from 25N165E to 22N154E to 18N174E back to 25N165E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
4:34AM Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
9:52AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
4:33PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
10:50PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:00AM	6:45 PM
Wednesday	6:01AM	6:45 PM
Thursday	6:01AM	6:45 PM
Friday	6:01AM	6:44 PM
Saturday	6:01AM	6:44 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:13AM	9:25PM
Wednesday	10:03AM	10:01PM
Thursday	10:53AM	10:39PM
Friday	11:44AM	11:19PM
Saturday	12:35AM	

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2008

DEPARTURES			
Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:40am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:45pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,4,5,7
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	6:40pm	9:25pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS			
Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:55pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:25am+1	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	10:35pm	5:15am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

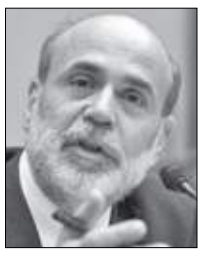
Business

Fed likely to hold rates steady

WASHINGTON (AP)—An ugly brew of rising unemployment, spiking foreclosures and gyrating energy prices is plaguing the country and making life difficult for Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke as he tries to right the economy.

Bernanke and his central bank colleagues are faced with dueling problems: weak economic growth and advancing inflation. To treat one risks aggravating the other. So the Fed is widely expected when it meets Tuesday to leave a key interest rate alone.

"It is caught between a rock and a hard place. The (Fed) will stand pat," predicted Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at California State University Channel Islands.


Bernanke

If Sohn and other economists prove correct, the Fed's rate will stay at 2 percent. And, in turn, the prime lending rate for millions of consumers and businesses would stay at 5 percent. The prime rate applies to certain credit cards, home equity lines of credit and other lines.

With inflation worries growing, the Fed in June halted a nearly yearlong string of rate reductions, one of its most aggressive campaigns to shore up the wobbly economy. Additional rate reductions would aggravate inflation, and some don't think additional cuts would provide much relief to the economy's biggest problems: the collapsed housing market and credit troubles.

President Bush recently signed into law Congress' housing rescue package. The plan would make it easier for thousands of people at risk of losing their home to refinance into a cheaper, government-backed mortgage. The Fed, meanwhile, has taken a number of extraordinary steps to ease credit problems so that banks, investment houses and others will keep on lending. The free flow of credit is like oxygen to the economy. Without it, people find it difficult to make big-ticket purchases like homes and cars and businesses are less inclined to expand and hire workers.

Lax oversight risks millions of Medicare dollars

WASHINGTON (AP)—The government is putting millions of Medicare dollars at risk by authorizing fictitious sellers of wheelchairs, prosthetics and other medical supplies to submit reimbursement claims with only limited review, congressional investigators say.

The study by the Government Accountability Office obtained by The Associated Press sought to follow up on oversight gaps that have plagued the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services since at least 2005. Roughly $1 billion of the $10 billion in annual Medicare payments the government makes for medical equipment are later deemed improper.

The investigation found that CMS approved two companies in the past year for Medicare billing privileges that the GAO had set up as sham businesses. The companies did not have clients or medical inventory to supply prospective Medicare patients.

These fictitious suppliers, based in Maryland and Virginia, won privileges even though GAO investigators deliberately provided the government with sketchy information and false documents that offered little assurances the companies were legitimate.

Bus travel grows as fuel soars, airfares leap

NEW YORK (AP)—It's a tale of two cities: Nikita Bernstein, 29, a dyed-in-the-wool New Yorker with a business in Boston, was in need of a cheap way to travel between his two homes. And a place to plug in his laptop, store his bike and stretch his legs along the way.

AP

Nikita Bernstein, left, waits to board a Bolt Bus in New York on Tuesday, July 22, 2008. Bernstein, who was traveling to Boston, heard about the inexpensive bus service through word-of-mouth.

Bernstein is an example of a growing number of people, often young professionals, that are jumping on the bus as their primary method of travel. The service Bernstein uses most often, discount carrier BoltBus, offers amenities including wireless internet, electrical outlets, extra leg room and flushable toilets.

Once considered the travel choice of last resort, some say the confluence of rising gas prices, airline headaches and the rise of discount carriers is creating a kind of renaissance in the bus industry.

Joseph P. Schwieterman, a professor of public service management at DePaul University, said growth in the bus industry has accelerated recently—reversing steady declines since 1960—as low-cost carriers such as Coach USA's Megabus and Greyhound's Boltbus take aim at the lucrative curbside business of so-called Chinatown operators.

Chinatown buses, which run from one city's Chinatown to another, offer an extremely popular curbside service, especially among 20-somethings looking for an inexpensive way to get wherever they are going. They also operate outside of terminals, saving companies millions in building and labor costs.

Megabus was first launched in the U.S. in April 2006. It offers cheaper fares the longer a ticket is booked in advance, with perks comparable to BoltBus. The highest fare tops out at $27. The Chicago-based service expanded to the East Coast in May of this year, adding routes from New York to Washington D.C., Boston, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Baltimore, Buffalo, N.Y. Atlantic City, N.J. and Toronto.

But the carrier closed its hub in Los Angeles last month citing low ridership.

Coach USA President and Chief Operating Officer Dale Moser said the company saw the number of day passengers on its service surge 137 percent last year. He attributed part of the jump to the U.S. launch of Megabus.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Brazil's Vale spends US$1.6 billion for ore ships

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP)—Brazilian mining company Vale has placed a US$1.6 billion order for 12 huge iron ore carriers from China's Rongsheng shipbuilder, and the vessels will be the biggest of their kind in the world, Vale said Sunday. The ships, which Rongsheng Shipbuilding and Heavy Industries will build for Vale - the world's largest iron ore producer—will have a capacity of 400,000 deadweight tons each. The ship deal comes on top of a US$59 billion investment program through 2013 already promised by Vale. The first of the ships will be delivered in 2011.

Verizon, unions extend contract negotiations

NEW YORK (AP)—Verizon Communications Inc. and two unions representing some 65,000 of its workers remained in talks after agreeing to "stop the clock" on contracts that were set to expire at 12:01 a.m. Sunday. The company expects "business as usual" on Monday as talks continue, Verizon spokesman Eric Rabe said late Sunday. Major bargaining issues include health care coverage for employees and retirees, wages and union representation for new job areas. One of the unions, the Communications Workers of America, said earlier Sunday a strike had been postponed "in light of progress that has been made" in the negotiations.

Rich begin feeling the pain in down economy

By MARK JEWELL
AP BUSINESS WRITER

The rich are sharing your financial pain—and contributing to it.

It may have taken longer and it may not be as acute, but there are early hints that the economic slump is crimping the lifestyles of the wealthy.

They are investing more conservatively, spending less on luxury goods and are being more thrifty with their credit cards. Many are asking their personal shoppers and private-jet travel providers to seek the best deals rather than over-the-top extravagances.

That news may produce a shrug from many people who have lost their jobs or homes in this economy. The problem is that when the wealthy get stingy, it trickles down to the rest of us.

"It's a sluggish economy, and its difficulties are felt all over," said Joseph DiRenzo, a married 38-year-old father of three who left a hedge fund two years ago to enter commercial real estate.

DiRenzo says he's feeling the hit in many places, especially in the value of his house on Long Island's upscale Gold Coast in Muttontown, N.Y.

He owns the kind of place you'd expect a former hedge-fund manager would call home: six bedrooms, seven full baths, hand-crafted Italian doors throughout, high-tech security and sound systems, and 9,000 square feet of living space on 2.4 acres.

It can be had for $7 million—a good deal, he says, when you consider his next-door neighbor's comparable home sold for $9 million last fall. He has cut the price twice in the 12 months it's been on the market.

DiRenzo is looking for a smaller, cheaper home. He also may buy a hybrid to supplement the two Mercedes Benzes in his heated four-car garage. And, he's driving less these days.

The DiRenzos aren't unlike many American families cutting back to weather a downturn. They're just richer.

To be sure, the poor and middle-class are being hurt more, but upper crust thriftiness could reverberate across the rest of the economy.

The 10 percent of households with the highest incomes account for nearly a quarter of all spending, according to data compiled by research firm Moody's Economy.com from a 2006 federal survey.

"That does suggest those folks are important for the spending outlook, and the overall economic outlook," said Scott Hoyt, Moody's director of consumer economics.

Other government data show households in the top one-fifth of the U.S. population ranked by income earn about half of all total personal income before taxes—an imbalance that gives the wealthy immense economic clout, said Sara Johnson, an economist at the research firm Global Insight.

"Consumer spending makes up 70 percent of gross domestic product, and when one group accounts for a very substantial share of consumer spending, they also account for a large share of the economic activity that creates jobs," Johnson said.

On Friday, the Labor Department reported that the unemployment rate had jumped to the highest in four years. The housing slump, tighter credit, high fuel prices and a lack of confidence is causing employers to cut expansion plans, or even let employees go.

It doesn't help when your customer base is pinching its pennies, either.

"A lot of our clients stop by a deli on the way to the airport, rather than have a catered meal on the plane" costing $50 per boxed lunch, said Justin Sullivan. Sullivan is the founder of Regent Jet, an Andover, Mass.-based broker that buys blocks of aircraft time to trim costs for high-end clientele whose multi-leg itineraries can sometimes exceed $100,000.

Trevor Gilman, a professional pilot, says his charter service out of western Massachusetts' Berkshires Mountains has flown about half as many miles so far this year compared with the same time last year. Consequently, the service hasn't replaced a handful of employees who recently found other work or retired.

"We're down to a total of two crews for three airplanes," Gilman said.

Unity Marketing, a Stevens, Pa.-based firm whose clients include retailers in the more than $322 billion U.S. luxury goods market, said its latest poll of affluent people nationwide found a 20 percent decline in spending on luxury goods in this year's second quarter, and the lowest luxury consumer confidence level in the nearly five years the survey has been conducted.

Just over half of the 1,024 respondents earning an average income of $204,800 predicted they would spend less on luxury in the coming 12 months than they did a year ago.

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Tropical Storm Edouard forms off Louisiana coast

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Tropical Storm Edouard formed in the Gulf of Mexico on Sunday, and forecasters expected it to bring high winds and several inches of rain to the coasts of western Louisiana and eastern Texas. Forecasters at the National Hurricane Center made Edouard, packing 45-mph winds, the fifth tropical storm of the 2008 hurricane season. They expected the storm to strengthen and said it could reach hurricane strength by the time it made landfall in Texas sometime Tuesday. A tropical storm watch was in effect from the mouth of the Mississippi River to Intercoastal City, La. That meant tropical storm conditions were expected in the next 24 hours.

Texas defies World Court, Bush on execution

HOUSTON (AP)—The planned execution this week of a man convicted in one of Houston's most brutal murder cases in a generation has become among the most contentious in the state that has the nation's busiest capital punishment system. International attention has been focused on the execution of convicted killer Jose Medellin scheduled for Tuesday. The International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, said the Mexican-born Medellin and some 50 other Mexicans on death row around the nation should have new hearings in U.S. courts to determine whether a 1963 treaty was violated during their arrests. Medellin, now 33, is the first among the 50 who is set to die.

Anglican leader seeks moratorium on gay bishops

NEW YORK (AP)—Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, struggling to hold together the troubled world Anglican family, urged church leaders gathered Sunday in England not to consecrate another gay bishop, saying the fellowship will be in "grave peril" without a moratorium. In his final speech at the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference, Williams said Anglicans need "space for study and free discussion without pressure" about whether to accept changes in traditional biblical understanding of same-sex relationships. He also asked churches to refrain from adopting official prayers for blessing same-gender unions. The 77 million-member Anglican Communion has been splintering since 2003, when the U.S. Episcopal Church consecrated the first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire.

Harlem pastor steps aside amid allegations

NEW YORK (AP)—The Archdiocese of New York says a Harlem pastor has stepped aside after being accused of sexually abusing a minor. The archdiocese says in a statement posted on its Web site Sunday that it has directed the Rev. Monsignor Wallace Harris to relinquish his duties as pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish. The archdiocese says Harris denied the allegations, which have been referred to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. Harris delivered an invocation at Gov. David Paterson's inauguration in March and served as the event coordinator for the pope's Sunday Mass in April.

Scientist: DNA led agents to anthrax suspect

WASHINGTON (AP)—DNA taken from the bodies of people killed in the 2001 anthrax attacks helped lead investigators to Bruce Ivins, who oversaw the highly specific type of toxin in an Army lab, a government scientist said Sunday.

Using new genome technology, researchers looked at samples of cells from the victims to identify the kind of anthrax Ames strain that killed them, the scientist said. They noticed very subtle differences in the DNA of the strain used in the attacks than in other types of Ames anthrax.

Spores taken from envelopes used to mail the anthrax, as well as from the sites where they were sent, also were scrutinized.

With that, investigators linked the specific type of anthrax back to Ivins' biological weapons lab at Ft. Detrick in Frederick, Md., where he oversaw its use and handling for research.

"It had to do with the very specific characteristics in the DNA of the letters and what was in Bruce's labs," said the government scientist, who is close to the investigation. "They were cultures he was personally responsible for."

The scientist spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to reporters. A senior U.S. official on Sunday night confirmed the scientist's account.

The scientific discovery gave the FBI its first solid break in one of the nation's most high-profile unsolved crimes after years of pointing the finger at the wrong suspect. Combined with other evidence, the Justice Department is expected to close the case this week, concluding Ivins was the mastermind and sole criminal behind the attacks that killed five and sickened 17 others in the weeks following 9/11.

Ivins killed himself last week as prosecutors prepared to indict him on murder charges.

RELAXING AT CAMP DAVID AP

President Bush welcomes United Arab Emirates Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum at Camp David, Md., Sunday, Aug 3, 2008.

Obama makes bid in 7 longtime Republican states

WASHINGTON (AP)—Alaska is young. Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia have growing populations and many black voters. Montana has seen recent Democratic inroads, and North Dakota has sent only Democrats to Congress since 1986. Indiana borders Barack Obama's home state.

The Democratic presidential candidate is putting money and manpower in all seven of these states—at levels unmatched by Republican rival John McCain.

For decades, these states have almost exclusively voted for Republican presidential candidates and have rarely seen any campaign action. Now, thanks in part to demographic and political shifts, they are emerging as new battlegrounds.

"We have the organizational ability and the financial ability to compete there," Obama campaign manager David Plouffe said recently. "There is not a head fake among them."

Undeterred, senior McCain strategist Steve Schmidt said: "We feel very confident about holding these states." He also expressed optimism that McCain can win several Democratic-leaning perennial swing targets.

In the seven historically GOP bastions, Obama has run five weeks' worth of TV ads and dispatched dozens of workers to sign up legions of unregistered voters that his campaign believes can be persuaded to support the Illinois senator in droves if courted aggressively. Among their targets are blacks and young people, two constituencies that favor Obama but historically have been unreliable voters.

McCain is largely absent from most of these states, trusting for now that right-leaning roots will prevail.

Mom: Cops' visit may have 'freaked' ambush suspect

KINGSFORD, Mich. (AP)—The Michigan man suspected of ambushing a group of young revelers at a swimming hangout last week might have snapped after police began investigating him for sexual assault, the man's mother said Sunday.

Judy Johnson described her son to The Associated Press as a once-carefree father of two who became introverted after his wife left him seven years ago and took their children with her to Ohio.

Police gave her their business card Thursday afternoon and asked her to have her son call them about a case they wouldn't discuss with her, said. Scott J. Johnson, 38, returned to their home in Kingsford, Mich., a few hours later. She gave her son the card, and he said he would take care of it and walked out, she said.

"He seemed calm but looked like he was anxious to leave," Judy Johnson said tearfully. "He walked out, and that's the last time I saw my boy."

She said he was probably "freaked out" over police interest in him.

According to police, Scott Johnson ended up at a bridge about 3 miles away where teens often gathered to swim and dive in the Menominee River. He jumped from bushes and opened fire on about a half-dozen young people relaxing by the bridge, which links Niagara, Wis., and Kingsford, police said. Three teens were killed, and a 20-year-old was injured.

Authorities say Scott Johnson was dressed in camouflage, but his mother said he left the house in a green T-shirt and dark shorts with no weapons.

FBI is investigating new attacks on Calif. scientists

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (AP)—The FBI is investigating two bombings that targeted university scientists, the latest in a rash of attacks against biomedical researchers who experiment on animals, authorities say.

Both scientists work at the University of California, Santa Cruz. One of them and his family were forced to escape from a second-story window early Saturday when a firebomb was lit on the home's porch, Santa Cruz police said. An adult was treated at a hospital and released.

Police Capt. Steve Clark called the bombing "an attempted homicide."

Also that morning, a firebomb destroyed a car belonging to another researcher. Clark said authorities were treating the attacks as "domestic terrorism."

The attacks came four days after police obtained animal rights pamphlets left at a Santa Cruz coffeehouse that contained the names and home addresses of university scientists.

"Animal abusers everywhere beware," the pamphlets read. "We know where you live."

Asia

At least 9 climbers feared dead on K-2

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—At least nine climbers were feared dead on K-2, the world's second highest mountain, after an avalanche cut ropes used to cross a treacherous wall of ice, officials and other climbers said Sunday.

Several other mountaineers were missing, prompting a desperate rescue effort on the peak in northern Pakistan, which is regarded as more dangerous to climb than Mount Everest.

A total of 22 people, mostly foreigners, in eight different groups scaled K-2's summit on Friday, said Nazir Sabir of the Alpine Club of Pakistan.

As they made their way down, an avalanche carried away ropes fixed 1,148 feet below the peak, sweeping some climbers to their deaths and stranding others at a height where they would likely succumb to exposure, Sabir said.

Accounts varied on the number of dead and how they died.

Sabir said nine people died in the avalanche. Included in that number, were two rescuers—a Nepalese sherpa and a Pakistani porter—who survivors said fell to their death.

He said two other climbers—a Pakistani and a Serbian on an expedition he helped organize—fell to their deaths Friday on the way up.

Mohammed Akram, vice president of the Adventure Foundation of Pakistan, a nonprofit organization, said six climbers died in the avalanche with another three killed in other accidents Friday.

He said several others, including local porters, were missing.

Akram said one rescue team dispatched Sunday had reached a Dutchman and an Italian suffering from frostbite and were helping them down toward a camp at an altitude of 21,325 feet.

He said helicopter crews spotted survivors, but could not pluck them to safety because the air is too thin for them to operate so high.

The fixed rope lines were strung across a point on the mountain known as "The Bottleneck." Chris Warner, an American who climbed K-2 last year, said it was the deadliest place on the mountain, the fall from there down the south face is some 9,000 feet.

"You can see how for people who were exhausted, it would have been nearly impossible for them to descend without the ropes," said Warner.

AP

Bodies of devotees are seen in the Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh, India, Sunday, Aug. 3, 2008.

Stampede kills 145 at remote Hindu temple in India

NEW DELHI (AP)—Thousands of panicked pilgrims stampeded Sunday at a remote mountaintop temple in northern India during celebrations to honor a Hindu goddess, sending dozens of people plummeting to their deaths and trampling scores more. Police said 145 people were killed.

Rumors of a landslide apparently started the panic at the shrine in the foothills of the Himalayas, said C.P. Verma, a senior government official in the Bilaspur district.

Pilgrims already at the Naina Devi Temple began running down the narrow path leading from the peak. There, they collided with devotees winding their way up.

With a concrete wall on one side and a precipice on the other, there was nowhere to escape and they were crushed. At one point a guard rail broke and dozens of people fell to their deaths.

The bodies of the devotees—many dressed in brightly colored holiday clothes—carpeted the path, intertwined with flattened iron railings. Many still held the flowers and food they planned to offer at the temple.

Police said they used a cable car at the shrine to ferry some of the bodies down, and helicopters flew in to take the wounded to hospitals.

At the Bilaspur hospital in Himachal Pradesh state, rescue workers unloaded bodies wrapped in brown blankets from a truck and laid them in neat rows so they could be identified by relatives.

"I rushed to the spot in search of my three children who had gone to pay obeisance at the hilltop shrine," Jawahar Khurana told the Press Trust of India news agency as he searched the bodies.

"I fail to understand why God was so cruel to us," he said.

All the bodies were taken to the Anandpur Sahib hospital in the neighboring state of Punjab where authorities were carrying out autopsies, senior police officer R. N. Dhoke told The Associated Press by telephone from the hospital. He said the death toll was not expected to rise further.

Many of the dead were women and children, he said, and another 37 people were injured and in hospital.

In Korea's 'Crying Cave', 100s died in US attack

YEONGCHUN, South Korea (AP)—The war refugees, frigid, laden with baggage, trudged down a mountain road on a winter's day in 1951, toward the safety of U.S. Army lines. But they were turned back at gunpoint, to return home to a fiery doom.

Within days, hundreds of the displaced villagers, crowding into a narrow cave, came under napalm attack from waves of U.S. Air Force planes. More than 300 died, mostly women and children, most trapped in the smoke and flames, some strafed when they fled, survivors say.

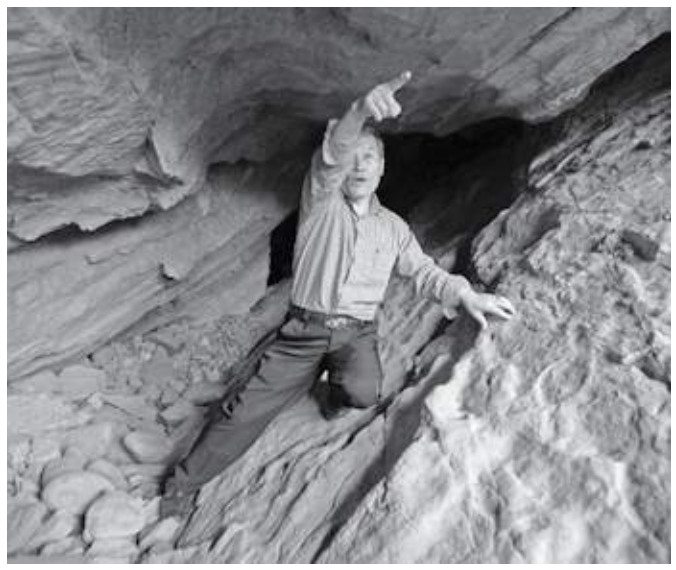
"People moaned and screamed and shouted in the darkness," recalled Cho Byung-woo, who escaped the inferno as a boy. "It was hell. How could they not tell civilians from North Korean troops?"

"They wouldn't have died like that if they had allowed the refugees to pass through their lines," he added.

After a two-year investigation, the story of Gokgyegul, the "Cave of the Crying Stream," was confirmed on May 20 by the South Korean government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was one of the first inquiries completed among dozens of such cases of alleged mass killing of South Korean civilians by American forces in 1950-51.

"The U.S. military hardly took into consideration a risk that its massive bombing and incineration operations could take heavy tolls on civilians," the commission concluded, calling the attack indiscriminate and saying the U.S. had failed, with the roadblock, to meet its responsibility to safeguard refugees.

It urged the South Korean government to seek victims' compensation from Washington. The U.S. Embassy in Seoul says it has not yet been approached on the compensation issue.



AP

South Korean villager Cho Byung-woo recounts on April 22, 2008 what happened in January 1951 when U.S. warplanes dropped napalm bombs at the mouth of this cave, where hundreds of refugees had gathered.

Korean War pilot: 'We're not lily-white'

As young pilots they plunged into the smoke and fury of the Korean War in slow, unarmed observer planes, pinpointing targets for the big boys with the bombs. Today, old men, they share their misgivings.

"We're not lily-white," says George P. Wolf. "It was really tough to try to decide who was who, and who should we hit," says Lewis J. Neville.

Wolf and Neville flew T-6 Texans, 145-mph propeller-driven planes, for the "Mosquitoes," the 6147th Tactical Control Squadron. As airborne spotters, they directed Air Force and Navy jets to North Korean and Chinese troops and other targets during the 1950-53 war.

"I know at times we were ordered to strafe refugees. In fact, I pulled fighters off refugees at times," said Wolf, 88, of Arlington, Texas, recalling the war's early months, when U.S. commanders feared North Korean soldiers were disguising themselves as civilians.

China quake victims cheer Olympic torch

GUANG'AN, China (AP)—Crowds roared with delight and waved hundreds of Chinese flags in welcome as the Olympic torch began an emotional tour of Sichuan on Sunday, three months after a powerful quake devastated large swaths of the lush, mountainous province.

A minute of silence to honor the victims of the earthquake was held before the start of the run in Guang'an. The city is about 190 miles from the epicenter of the quake but was unscathed.

Thousands of people were on hand, some wearing orange, red and white T-shirts that said "Light the Passion, Share the Dream." They were gathered in a tourist park that honors communist patriarch Deng Xiaoping. Guang'an is his hometown.

A traditional drum performance was held before the first of 189 torch bearers set off on the 4.5-mile route. The way was lined with thousands of people, many waving Chinese and Olympic flags.

"I'm so moved ... it's been a long wait. Even if we have to wait for hours it is worthwhile," said 28-year-old government worker Li Lei. Li, who said he cried when the torch run started, is from An county near Beichuan in northern Sichuan, one of the hardest-hit areas in the earthquake.

Another man said the torch would help Sichuan rebuild.

"The torch represents peace and harmony. The Olympic spirit will give us strength to rebuild," said Qin Yi, also a government worker.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Fire kills 10 people in Bangladesh's capital

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—A fire swept through a five-story building in a crowded section of Bangladesh's capital Monday, killing at least 10 people and injuring five others, rescue officials said. Firefighters and residents recovered 10 charred bodies from the building on Dhaka's Aga Sadek road, fire official Ataur Rahman said. The victims were asleep when the pre-dawn blaze started, Rahman said. Among the dead were two children. Five people were taken to a hospital with burns. Rahman said it was not immediately known what caused the fire, which was brought under control by dozens of firefighters assisted by local residents.

Report: 16 police killed in China border attack

BEIJING (AP)—China's official Xinhua News Agency says an attack on a border patrol station on the country's frontier with Central Asia has killed 16 police officers. The report says the assailants used a dump truck to ram their way into the paramilitary police station in Kashi and then tossed two hand grenades. Besides the dead, Xinhua says 16 officers were injured. Xinhua, citing police, said two attackers were arrested. It did not identify them. The area is home to a Muslim Turkic people, the Uighurs (WEE'-gurs). The Uighurs have waged a simmering rebellion against Chinese rule. The attack comes four days before the opening of the Olympics in Beijing.

Christians in south RP protest autonomy deal for Muslims

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP)—Thousands of Christians in the southern Philippines rallied Monday against the signing of a preliminary accord granting minority Muslims an expanded homeland as part of efforts to end a bloody Islamic insurgency. Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front negotiators were headed for Malaysia to sign the agreement Tuesday that identifies territory to fall under the Muslim region. The MILF, estimated to have 11,000 fighters, has been battling for self-rule in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's volatile south for decades. But some Catholic politicians protested, saying an enlarged Muslim region would lead to renewed sectarian violence and vowing to obstruct the government's plan to conclude the peace accord.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Austria: Plutonium leak at IAEA contained

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—The International Atomic Energy Agency said plutonium had leaked in one of its laboratories Sunday but no radiation escaped the building and no one was hurt. The agency said in a statement the leak happened in the high security area of its nuclear lab in Seibersdorf, 35 kilometers (22 miles) south of Vienna. "Pressure buildup in a small sealed sample bottle in a storage safe resulted in plutonium contamination of a storage room," the agency said. It said the incident occurred at about 0030GMT Sunday and no one was in the lab at the time. The agency excluded the possibility that a person caused the incident, IAEA spokesman Ayhan Evrensel said.

UK hospital says newlywed shot in Antigua has died

LONDON (AP)—A newlywed shot on the last day of his Caribbean honeymoon has died, a British hospital said Sunday. Morriston Hospital in Swansea, Wales, said brain stem tests showed that Benjamin Mullany—comatose since he was shot in the head in Antigua last week—was dead. He had been on life support systems. His bride, Catherine Mullany, was shot and killed in the same attack. Her body was flown home Friday. The Mullanys, both 31, were married July 12 and went to Antigua for a two-week honeymoon. They were attacked on July 27 in the cottage where they were staying at the Cocos Hotel resort in the island's southwest. Police in Antigua have said robbery appears to be a motive in the shootings.

South Ossetia sends busloads of children to Russia

TBILISI, Georgia (AP)—The breakaway republic of South Ossetia began sending hundreds of children across the border to its Russian ally on Sunday amid increasing violence between the republic and Georgian government forces. A spokeswoman for the separatist South Ossetian government said the children were in constant danger and were evacuated. But a Georgian government minister disputed that and said they were going to youth camps as usual in the summer. South Ossetia has sought closer ties to Russia as it distances itself from Georgia. Russia, which maintains a large peacekeeping contingent in the breakaway province, said Sunday that the situation in South Ossetia remains explosive. The Foreign Ministry in Moscow said the threat of all-out war is "increasingly real."

Abbas denies asylum to supporters from Gaza

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday refused to grant West Bank asylum to forces who fled weekend faction fighting in Hamas-ruled Gaza, despite fears for their safety. Abbas ordered nearly 200 fighters back to Gaza from Israel, insisting a Fatah presence must be retained in the territory, which has been controlled by Hamas since a violent takeover in June 2007. Fatah is not prepared to write off Gaza, and Abbas also fears that an entrenched Hamas there could export rebellion to the West Bank, where he rules. Hamas confirmed it detained the first group of 32 who were sent back to Gaza on Sunday, but said it released all but five in that group.

Blast near police station in Algeria wounds 21

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP)—A blast near a police station in northern Algeria early Sunday wounded 21 people, including six police officers, the Interior Ministry said. The explosion occurred in Tizi-Ouzou, a northern city about 62 miles east of the capital, Algiers, the ministry said in a statement that gave no further details. Witnesses said the explosion appeared to have come from a van. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, but the country's al-Qaida affiliate - al-Qaida in Islamic North Africa - has said it was behind most recent bombings. The group, formerly known as the GSPC, grew out of an insurgency in the 1990s. The violence, which left as many as 200,000 dead, was prompted by the army's cancellation of 1992 legislative elections that an Islamist party was poised to win.

Explosives expert wanted by US killed

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Al-Qaida confirmed Sunday the death of a top commander accused of training the suicide bombers who killed 17 American sailors on the USS Cole eight years ago.

Abu Khabab al-Masri, who had a $5 million bounty on his head from the United States, is believed to have been killed in an airstrike apparently launched by the U.S. in Pakistan last week.

An al-Qaida statement posted on the Internet said al-Masri and three other top figures were killed and warned of vengeance for their deaths. It did not say when, where or how they died but said some of their children were killed along with them.

Pakistani authorities have said they believe al-Masri is one of six people killed in an airstrike on July 28 on a compound in South Waziristan, a lawless tribal region near the Afghan border.

The U.S. military has not confirmed it was behind the missile strike. But similar U.S. attacks are periodically launched on militant targets in the tribal border region.

Both Osama bin Laden and his top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, are believed to be hiding in the rugged and lawless region along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

The U.S. Justice Department has accused al-Masri, an Egyptian militant whose real name is Midhat Mursi al-Sayid Umar, of training terrorists to use poisons and explosives.

He is also believed to have helped run al-Qaida's Darunta training camp in eastern Afghanistan until the camp was abandoned amid the 2001 U.S. invasion of the country. There he is thought to have conducted experiments in chemical and biological weapons, testing materials on dogs.

The al-Qaida statement called al-Masri and the other three slain commanders "a group of heroes" and warned of retaliation.

"We tell the enemies of God that God has saved those who will be even more painful for you," it said. "As Abu Khabab has gone, he left behind, with God's grace, a generation of faithful students who will make you suffer the worst torture and avenge him and his brothers."

The statement, whose authenticity could not be independently confirmed, was dated July 30 and signed by al-Qaida's top Afghan leader, Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed. It was posted on an Islamic militant Web site where al-Qaida usually issues official statements and videos of its leaders.

Kamal Shah, a senior official in Pakistan's Interior Ministry, said the government had "no official confirmation as yet" that al-Masri was dead. The White House declined comment Sunday.

AP

This photo released by IntelCenter on Sunday Aug. 3, 2008 purports to shows Abu Khabab al-Masri whose real name is Midhat Mursi al-Sayid Umar.

No deal on election bill, bomb kills 12 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP)—Despite intense U.S. pressure, Iraqi leaders failed Sunday to resolve differences over how to govern the oil-rich city of Kirkuk - a dispute that is blocking provincial elections and stoking tension in the volatile north. Also Sunday, a truck bomb exploded in a Sunni area of northern Baghdad, killing 12 people, wounding 23 and raising concern about a revival of sectarian conflict.

Parliament had called a special session Sunday to try to reach agreement on a bill authorizing elections in all 18 Iraqi provinces - a move the United States considers essential to reconciling Iraq's rival ethnic and religious communities.

But the session never convened because intensive talks among party and legislative leaders were unable to produce agreement on a formula that would satisfy Arab, Kurdish and Turkoman demands for governing Kirkuk.

Kurds consider Kirkuk their traditional capital and want to incorporate it into their self-ruled region of the north. Arabs and Turkomen want the city to remain under central government control. Last month, parliament approved an election bill after Kurdish lawmakers walked out in protest. But President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, rejected the bill and sent it back to parliament.

AP

$100M FIRE

A merchant inspects the wreckage of his burned shop after a fire at the Oriental Market, considered the biggest one in Central America, in Managua, Nicaragua on Sunday, Aug. 3, 2008. A huge fire destroyed Managua's landmark Oriental Market, wiping out 1,500 vendor stalls and causing an estimated 100 million dollars in damage, local media reported early on Saturday.

Man beheads girlfriend in Greece

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—A 31-year-old man killed his girlfriend on the Greek island of Santorini on Sunday, beheaded her, then fled in a patrol car, a local official said.

During the ensuing chase, the suspect was shot five times by police and ran over two women doctors who were riding a motorcycle before he was caught, the official said.

The suspect, Athanassios Arvanitis, a cook at a local restaurant, is undergoing surgery at an island hospital, said Chrysanthos Roussos, head of the Santorini district on the island.

Neighbors said that, following a heated argument, Arvanitis beheaded his girlfriend's dog with a butcher knife, then killed and beheaded the woman.

The victim, 25-year-old Adamantia Karkali, worked as a teacher at a local village, Angelos Roussos, the mayor of Thira, the island's main town, was quoted as saying by TV station Antenna. Angelos Roussos and Chrysanthos Roussos are not related.

Initially, Arvanitis roamed the village of Vourvoulos exhibiting Karkali's head, neighbors said. Townspeople said they locked themselves in their homes and called the police.

Bomb hidden in trash pile kills 20 Somalis

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—A bomb hidden under a pile of garbage killed at least 20 people, half of them women who were sweeping the street in Somalia's capital, witnesses and doctors said Sunday.

The explosion and overnight attacks on military bases ended a brief period of relative calm that followed the signing of a peace deal between the government and the Islamic insurgency it is fighting. The agreement was already in jeopardy after the moderate cleric who signed it on behalf of the Islamic opposition movement was replaced by a hard-liner.

Several witnesses said the scene of Sunday's explosion was littered with blood and body parts, and described hearing the screams of the wounded as bystanders tried to help. Salah Adde said he counted 15 bodies, including 10 female street cleaners.

"I saw an old women who lost two legs and a hand, she was bleeding and later died before our eyes but we could do nothing as we ourselves needed help," Asha Ahmed, a 45-year-old woman who was wounded in the leg by shrapnel, told AP by phone from Medina hospital.

Dahir Dhere, the head of the hospital, said 47 wounded people were admitted - mostly women and children - and five died. Many were in critical condition, he said.

Overdrive

2009 FORD FLEX LIMITED

An aptly named wagon-van-SUV

By WARREN BROWN
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

CORNWALL, N.Y.—Angola Road is best driven with caution, especially at night when it twists into the darkness, sometimes seeming to disappear altogether. It is a rural, two-lane road often bereft of shoulders or guardrails.

You pay close attention when driving on Angola, a road potentially as unforgiving as its surrounding Hudson Valley scenery is beautiful. Still, Angola is one of those roads automotive writers dream about. It twists, turns, dips, rises, slants, and in doing all of those things speaks volumes about the worthiness of any vehicle traversing it. According to that truth, Ford, recently more accustomed to bad rather than good news, has a winner—the aptly named 2009 Ford Flex wagon.

This column uses "wagon" the same way automotive marketers and the journalists who honor them employ "crossover."

A wagon is an eminently sensible vehicle, one that combines cargo and passenger capacity in a manner flexible enough to accommodate both on a variety of travel missions.

Wagons have always done that work, as have wagon surrogates—minivans and sport-utility vehicles. We know what wagons are, and the Flex is a wagon, one that has the utility and road grace of a Land Rover and the personality and lovability of a Mini Cooper Clubman.

Had the Ford Flex Limited with all-wheel-drive also come with a low-sulfur diesel engine, I might have applied for a loan to buy one. I like it that much. The members of my crew—my wife, Mary Anne, and my associate Ria Manglapus—like it just as much.

We like the looks of it, which is no small thing. The trouble with wagons and other family haulers is that they too often have a boring exterior and interior design. But there is something wonderfully in-your-face about the Flex—its horizontally grooved side panels; its bold, three-bar grille; its optional, two-tone paint job and multi-panel glass roof; and an elegantly versatile interior that looks compact but feels generously spacious.

THE WASHINGTON POST

The 2009 Ford Flex Limited is a full-size family wagon that drew excellent marks in ride, acceleration and handling, and a rock-star head-turning quotient.

I used the Flex to haul appliances and other goods to a family home here. Ria used it in Virginia to transport teen-agers to tennis matches. The Flex served both of us well, performing as a truck without consuming fuel like one and carrying the passenger load of a minivan without looking like one.

But, again, on the matter of fuel, I wish Ford would have released the Flex with a diesel engine as an alternative to the 3.5-liter, 262-horsepower V-6 it offers as standard equipment.

With the V-6, we averaged 23 miles per gallon in highway driving and 20 mpg in urban traffic in the Flex Limited all-wheel-drive. That's not awful for a big family wagon. But neither is it as good as it should be.

A diesel engine would deliver 30 percent better fuel efficiency. Initial costs would be higher than those of a gasoline-powered Flex, but a diesel-powered Flex would save fuel.

Better fuel efficiency, combined with the extra torque generally afforded by diesel engines, could be worth the higher price.

It's just an idea, and a bit of a nudge to Ford to give the go-ahead to a diesel Flex. What the company has done so far with this vehicle is admirable. It handles night running on Angola Road with confidence and aplomb, even under the weight of yet another load from Home Depot. I just wish it were designed to make even fewer stops at the gas station.

NUTS & BOLTS

By WARREN BROWN
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Suggestion
The Flex currently comes in three trim levels—SE, SEL, and Limited, all with 3.5-liter V-6 engines. Ford should consider a diesel version in the higher-priced Limited models. Even at the generally higher prices for diesel-powered vehicles, here's betting that Ford would sell every diesel-powered Flex it made.

Ride, acceleration and handling
This one gets excellent marks in all three categories (as long as smaller people are assigned to the third-row seats). Handling on the twists and turns of Angola Road was impressive.

Head-turning quotient
It's the automotive equivalent of a rock star. People were drawn to it. And to all who asked: Yes, it's a real production vehicle. You can buy it. Yes, believe it or not, it was made by Ford.

Body style/layout
The Ford Flex is a front-engine, full-size family wagon available with front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive.

Engine/transmission
The Flex comes with a 3.5-liter, 24-valve V-6 engine that develops 262 horsepower at 6,250 revolutions per minute and 248 foot-pounds of torque at 4,500 revolutions per minute. The engine is mated to a six-speed automatic transmission.

Capacities
There are seats for seven people. Maximum cargo capacity is 83 cubic feet. (Luggage capacity with rear seats up is 15 cubic feet). The Flex can be equipped to tow a trailer weighing 4,150 pounds. The fuel tank holds 19.2 gallons of recommended regular unleaded gasoline.

Mileage
We averaged 23 miles per gallon on the highway, 20 mpg in urban traffic.

Safety
Standard equipment includes four-wheel antilock brakes, side and head air bags, electronic stability and traction control, and Ford/Microsoft Sync communications system.

Price
The base price on the 2009 Ford Flex Limited with all-wheel drive is $36,555. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $33,940. Price as tested is $43,720, including $6,465 in options (onboard navigation with back-up camera, multi-panel glass roof, two-tone exterior paint, rear console refrigerator, and second-row heated seats) plus a $700 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is $40,135. Prices sourced from Ford, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

Purse-strings note
This is one of the most enjoyable family wagons available. It gets a "buy" here.

CRUISIN'

Don't skimp on tires

By GREG ZYLA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: Greg, I read your answer to the person who had a muscle car or pony car that "tire hopped" under acceleration in the winter, but not in the summer. You said his problem was due to the coldness of the rubber and roads in the wintertime.

I have a beautiful Firebird Formula LT1 that tire hopped all the time, and it started doing so when I put on a new set of tires that weren't as good as the ones I took off. When I switched back to the better, more expensive brand (Goodyear), with proper speed rating, the tire hop stopped. Just wanted to let you know.—Steve from Michigan

A: Thanks, Steve. You have experienced the importance of quality tires, and I've had the same situation with my cars over the years. Recently, I had a similar problem with my son's Z28 that was tire hopping. We switched from the rubber that came on the car when we bought it (the tire was not a real good one, similar to your situation) and put on four new 275/40R17 Bridgestone Potenza RE760 Sport tires. What a difference! Gone are all the problems previously encountered, and traction is great.

I want to emphasize to my readers that there are many quality tires to choose from, from companies like Bridgestone, Cooper, Dunlop, Firestone, Goodyear, Michelin, Pirelli, Toyo and on and on, but the bottom line is to spend money where immediate results can be felt, and never skimp when it comes to what puts you and your family on the road, be it performance or safety. Buy quality tires at all times.

Write to Greg Zyla in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to gzyla@ptd.net.

Chevy's small SUV leads the pack

By Tom Incantalupo
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

Affordable, reasonably gas-thrifty, unmistakable for anything else and fun to drive. That's a winning combination, so even in a widening field of small cars, Chevrolet's HHR SS sport utility vehicle stands out.

For a few grand more than basic HHRs, and at the cost of three miles per gallon in local driving, the SS version offers a ripping 260 horsepower when paired with a five-speed manual transmission, or a still-notable 235 hp. with an automatic, as I sampled it. And the HHR has the utility that only a box on wheels can provide.

The retro look of the HHR, inspired by the 1949 Chevrolet Suburban, is augmented in the SS by rocker extensions, highly polished wheels and other boy-racer touches that won't be to everyone's taste. But for about $23,000, this is one of the best performance bargains on the market.

The SS was added in December as an '08 to the HHR family, which debuted for the 2006 model year. More basic HHRs have either 2.2- or 2.4-liter, four-cylinder engines that deliver 149 hp. and 172 hp. respectively. The SS has a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine that is turbocharged.

The turbo boost comes on so gradually that the strongest evidence of its presence (besides the power, of course) is the boost gauge on the roof support pillar to the left of the windshield.

A few complaints: The HHR's retro look includes retro-fat roof pillars, which impair visibility somewhat, especially in turns. Sun glare sometimes makes gauges difficult to read. And the rear wiper and fog lamp switches would be better located near the front wiper and headlamp switches on the steering column rather than in the center of the dashboard.

Chevy says the stick-shift SS makes zero to 60 mph in 6.3 seconds. Fuel economy for the SS is estimated by the Environmental Protection Agency at 19 mpg in city driving, 28 mpg on the highway with an (awfully outdated) four-speed automatic gearbox, and at 21/29 mpg for the stick-shift version. My tester's driving computer showed averages of between 23 mpg and 26 mpg during my week with it.

Also unique to the SS is quicker (but still electric) steering and performance suspension with thicker stabilizer bars and gas-filled shocks; four-wheel disc brakes (replacing the front disc/rear drum setup) and wider, performance-type, all-season 18-inch tires, rather than the 16- or 17-inchers on lesser HHRs.

HHRs start at $17,370 with freight. The SS starts at $23,565 with a stick shift. Add a grand for the automatic. And if you buy an '08, add $395 for curtain air bags (standard for '09.) The HHR has the federal government's highest, five-star, rating for occupant protection in front and side crashes.

GM calls the HHR an SUV -- and the government classifies it as such -- but it's not available with all-wheel drive and it is not intended to tow a trailer.

Consumer Reports deems the HHR average in reliability, based on the magazine's annual survey of its readers. Market researchers J.D. Power and Associates say Chevrolets in general are about average.

Life & Style

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Youth Delegates take a group photo after the closing Mass at Randwick Racecourse celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, is seen on the large video screen giving his homily and opening greetings to the World Youth Day pilgrims.

NMI sends delegation to World Youth Day

Thousands of youth from around the world attended the five-day World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, in July and among the pilgrims was a strong delegation from the CNMI, comprising some 42 local students.

Accompanied by Marie T. Muna, assistant coordinator for the CNMI delegation, Fr. Man Soo Kye of the Korean Catholic Church of Saipan, Fr. Delfin Tumaca, and Rey D. Rosal of San Vicente Church, the delegation participated in prayers, Bible reading, confessions, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic celebrations, and a host of other programs.

Local families provided the youths with shelter. The CNMI delegation attended the Our Lady Mount Carmel Bonny Rigg and Mount Pritchrid churches.

The delegation has been preparing for the event since the beginning of 2007. They have been doing fundraisers and receiving support from sponsors.

Here are some pictures from the event:

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Korean Youth during the train ride to Sydney.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI clergy concelebrating with the presiding bishop of the day at Mass.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI youth and chaperones take pictures with other youth from Australia.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Amid thousands of people, the CNMI flag was a sure sign of the presence of the CNMI at the World Youth Day 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Youth Delegates pose for a souvenir picture at the Marconi Stadium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI youth group is shown awaiting the arrival of Cardinal Pell for the opening Mass at Barangaroo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI delegates gather around Diocesan Assistant Youth Director Jack Sablan for an announcement at the Oceania Festival.

Solzhenitsyn, chronicler of Soviet gulag, dies

By DOUGLAS BIRCH
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MOSCOW (AP)—Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel Prize-winning Russian author whose books chronicled the horrors of dictator Josef Stalin's slave labor camps, has died of heart failure, his son said Monday. He was 89.

Stepan Solzhenitsyn told The Associated Press his father died late Sunday in Moscow, but declined further comment.

Through unflinching accounts of the eight years he spent in the Soviet Gulag, Solzhenitsyn's novels and nonfiction works exposed the secret history of the vast prison system that enslaved millions. The accounts riveted his countrymen and earned him years of bitter exile, but international renown.

And they inspired millions, perhaps, with the knowledge that one person's courage and integrity could, in the end, defeat the totalitarian machinery of an empire.

Beginning with the 1962 short novel "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,"Solzhenitsyn(sohl-zheh-NEETS'-ihn) devoted himself to describing what he called the human "meat grinder" that had caught him along with millions of other Soviet citizens: capricious arrests, often for trifling and seemingly absurd reasons, followed by sentences to slave labor camps where cold, starvation and punishing work crushed inmates physically and spiritually.

His "Gulag Archipelago" trilogy of the 1970s shocked readers by describing the savagery of the Soviet state under the dictator Josef Stalin. It helped erase lingering sympathy for the Soviet Union among many leftist intellectuals, especially in Europe.

But his account of that secret system of prison camps was also inspiring in its description of how one person—Solzhenitsyn himself—survived, physically and spiritually, in a penal system of soul-crushing hardship and injustice.

The West offered him shelter and accolades. But Solzhenitsyn's refusal to bend despite enormous pressure, perhaps, also gave him the courage to criticize Western culture for what he considered its weakness and decadence.

After a triumphant return from exile in the U.S. in 1994 that included a 56-day train trip across Russia to become reacquainted with his native land, Solzhenitsyn later expressed annoyance and disappointment that most Russians hadn't read his books.

During the 1990s, his stalwart nationalist views, his devout Orthodoxy, his disdain for capitalism and disgust with the tycoons who bought Russian industries and resources cheaply following the Soviet collapse, were unfashionable. He faded from public view.

But under Vladimir Putin's 2000-2008 presidency, Solzhenitsyn's vision of Russia as a bastion of Orthodox Christianity, as a place with a unique culture and destiny, gained renewed prominence.

Putin now argues, as Solzhenitsyn did in a speech at Harvard University in 1978, that Russia has a separate civilization from the West, one that can't be reconciled either to Communism or western-style liberal democracy, but requires a system adapted to its history and traditions.

"Any ancient deeply rooted autonomous culture, especially if it is spread on a wide part of the earth's surface, constitutes an autonomous world, full of riddles and surprises to Western thinking," Solzhenitsyn said in the Harvard speech. "For one thousand years Russia has belonged to such a category."

Born Dec. 11, 1918, in Kislovodsk, Solzhenitsyn served as a front-line artillery captain in World War II, where, in the closing weeks of the war, he was arrested for writing what he called "certain disrespectful remarks" about Stalin in a letter to a friend, referring to him as "the man with the mustache." He served seven years in a labor camp in the barren steppe of Kazakhstan and three more years in internal exile in Central Asia.

That's where he began to write, memorizing much of his work so it wouldn't be lost if it were seized. His theme was the suffering and injustice of life in Stalin's gulag—a Soviet abbreviation for the slave labor camp system, which Solzhenitsyn made part of the lexicon.

He continued writing while working as a mathematics teacher in the provincial Russian city of Ryazan.

The first fruit of this labor was "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," the story of a carpenter struggling to survive in a Soviet labor camp, where he had been sent, like Solzhenitsyn, after service in the war.

The book was published in 1962 by order of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who was eager to discredit the abuses of Stalin, his predecessor, and created a sensation in a country where unpleasant truths were spoken in whispers, if at all. Abroad, the book—which went through numerous revisions—was lauded not only for its bravery, but for its spare, unpretentious language.

After Khrushchev was ousted in 1964, Solzhenitsyn began facing KGB harassment, publication of his works was blocked and he was expelled from the Soviet Writers Union. But he was undeterred.

"A great writer is, so to speak, a secret government in his country," he wrote in "The First Circle," his next novel, a book about inmates in one of Stalin's "special camps" for scientists who were deemed politically unreliable but whose skills were essential.

Solzhenitsyn, a graduate from the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Rostov University, was sent to one of these camps in 1946, soon after his arrest.

The novel "Cancer Ward", which appeared in 1967, was another fictional worked based on Solzhenitsyn's life. In this case, the subject was his cancer treatment in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, then part of Soviet Central Asia, during his years of internal exile from March 1953, the month of Stalin's death, until June 1956.

In the book, cancer became a metaphor for the fatal sickness of the Soviet system. "A man sprouts a tumor and dies -- how then can a country live that has sprouted camps and exile?"

He attacked the complicity of millions of Russians in the horrors of Stalin's reign.

"Suddenly all the professors and engineers turned out to be saboteurs—and they believed it? ... Or all of Lenin's old guard were vile renegades—and they believed it? Suddenly all their friends and acquaintances were enemies of the people—and they believed it?"

The Stalinist era, he wrote, quoting from a poem by Alexander Pushkin, forced Soviet citizens to choose one of three roles: tyrant, traitor, prisoner.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970, an unusual move for the Swedish Academy, which generally makes awards late in an author's life after decades of work. The academy cited "the ethical force with which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of Russian literature."

Soviet authorities barred the author from traveling to Stockholm to receive the award and official attacks were intensified in 1973 when the first book in the non-fiction "Gulag" trilogy appeared in Paris.

"During all the years until 1961," Solzhenitsyn wrote in an autobiography written for the Nobel Foundation, "not only was I convinced that I should never see a single line of mine in print in my lifetime, but, also, I scarcely dared allow any of my close acquaintances to read anything I had written because I feared that this would become known."

The following year, he was arrested on a treason charge and expelled the next day to West Germany in handcuffs. His expulsion inspired worldwide condemnation of the regime of Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

Solzhenitsyn then made his homeland in America, settling in 1976 in the tiny town of Cavendish, Vermont, with his wife and sons.

Living at a secluded hillside compound he rarely left, he called his 18 years there the most productive of his life. There he worked on what he considered to be his life's work, a multivolume saga of Russian history titled "The Red Wheel."

Although free from repression, Solzhenitsyn longed for his native land. Neither was he enchanted by Western democracy, with its emphasis on individual freedom.

To the dismay of his supporters, in his Harvard speech he rejected the West's faith "Western pluralistic democracy" as the model for all other nations. It was a mistake, he warned, for Western societies to regard the failure of the rest of the world to adopt the democratic model as a product of "wicked governments or by heavy crises or by their own barbarity or incomprehension."

Some critics saw "The Red Wheel" books as tedious and hectoring, rather than as sweeping and lit by moral fire.

"Exile from his great theme, Stalinism and the gulag, had exposed his major weaknesses," D.M. Thomas wrote in a 1998 biography, theorizing that the intensity of the earlier works was "a projection of his own repressed violence."

Then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev restored Solzhenitsyn's citizenship in 1990 and the treason charge was finally dropped in 1991, less than a month after a failed Soviet coup. Following an emotional homecoming that started in the Russian Far East on May 27, 1994, and became a whistle-stop tour across the country, Solzhenitsyn settled in a tree-shaded, red brick home overlooking the Moscow River just west of the capital.

While avoiding a partisan political role, Solzhenitsyn vowed to speak "the whole truth about Russia, until they shut my mouth like before."

He was contemptuous of President Boris Yeltsin, blaming Yeltsin for the collapse of Russia's economy, his dependence on bailouts by the International Monetary Fund, his inability to stop the expansion of NATO to Russia's borders, his tolerance of the rising influence of a handful of Russian billionaires—who were nicknamed "oligarchs" by an American diplomat.

Yeltsin's reign, Solzhenitsyn said, marked one of three "times of troubles" in Russian history—which included the 17th century crises that led to the rise of the Romanovs and the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. When Yeltsin awarded Solzhenitsyn Russia's highest honor, the Order of St. Andrew, the writer refused to accept it. When Yeltsin left office in 2000, Solzhenitsyn wanted him prosecuted.

The author's last book, 2001's "Two Hundred Years Together," addressed the complex emotions of Russian-Jewish relations. Some criticized the book for alleged anti-Semitic passages. But the author denied the charge, saying he "understood the subtlety, sensitivity and kindheartedness of the Jewish character."

Yeltsin's successor Putin at first had a rocky relationship with Solzhenitsyn, who criticized the Russian president in 2002 for not doing more to crack down on Russia's oligarchs. Putin was also a veteran of the Soviet-era KGB, the agency that, more than any other, represented the Soviet legacy of repression.

But the two men, so different, gradually developed a rapport. By steps, Putin adopted Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of the West, perhaps out of a recognition that Russia really is a different civilization, perhaps because the author offered justification for the Kremlin's determination to muzzle critics, to reassert control over Russia's natural resources and to concentrate political power.

Like Putin, Solzhenitsyn argued that Russia was following its own path to its own form of democratic society. In a June 2005 interview with state television, he said Russia had lost 15 years following the collapse of the Soviet Union by moving too quickly in the rush to build a more liberal society.

"We need to be better, so we need to go more slowly," he said

Following the death of Naguib Mahfouz in 2006, Solzhenitsyn became the oldest living Nobel laureate in literature. He is survived by his wife, Natalya, who acted as his spokesman, and his three sons, including Stepan, Ignat, a pianist and conductor, and Yermolai. All live in the United States.

AP

In this June 12, 2007 file photo, Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, visits Alexander Solzhenitsyn, center, in his house in Troitse-Lykovo in the outskirts of Moscow. Shown in the background are, Solzhenitsyn's sons, Stepan, far left, and Yermolai, wearing red striped tie.

'Dark Knight' grabs $43.8M more, nears $400M total

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Even an army of the undead could not dislodge Batman from his box-office perch.

The Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight" hauled in $43.8 million to rank as Hollywood's top movie for the third-straight weekend, fending off "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor," which opened a close second with $42.5 million.

"The Dark Knight" has soared to a $394.9 million haul in just 17 days, according to studio estimates Sunday. The Warner Bros. release should sail past the $400 million mark by Monday or Tuesday, said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner.

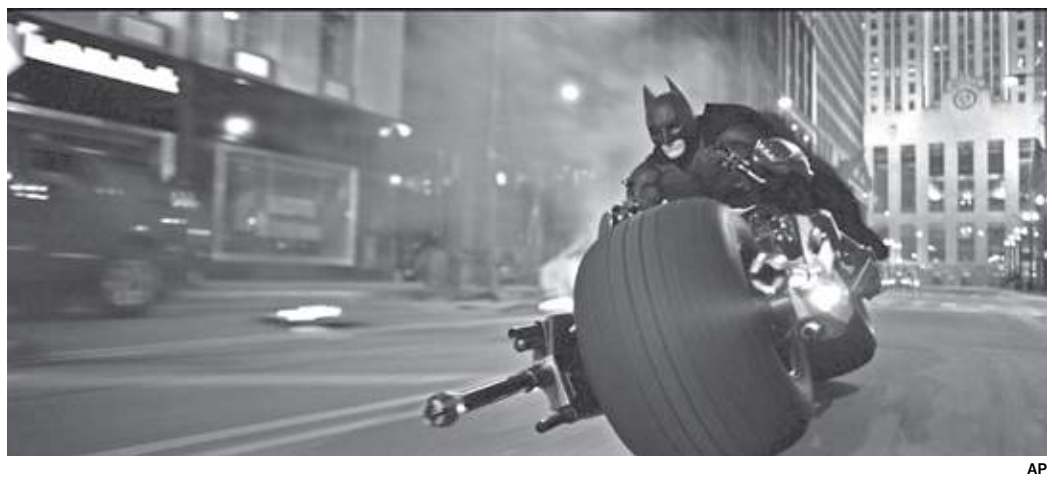
That would be on the film's 18th or 19th day of release, another record for "The Dark Knight," which had an all-time high opening weekend of $158.4 million. The previous $400 million record-holder was "Shrek 2," which hit that mark in 43 days. "It's a film that is just rewriting the record books every day and redefining our notions of what a blockbuster can be," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Media By Numbers.

1. "**The Dark Knight**," $43.8 million.
2. "**The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor**," $42.5 million.
3. "**Step Brothers**," $16.3 million.
4. "**Mamma Mia!**", $13.1 million.
5. "**Journey to the Center of the Earth**," $6.9 million.
6. "**Swing Vote**," $6.3 million.
7. "**Hancock**," $5.2 million.
8. "**WALL-E**," $4.7 million.
9. "**The X-Files: I Want to Believe**," $3.4 million.
10. "**Space Chimps**," $2.8 million.

"The Dark Knight" will top $500 million, predicted Fellman, who would not speculate on whether it could approach the all-time domestic revenue record of "Titanic" at $600.8 million.

Even if it edged past that mark, "The Dark Knight" would lag behind "Titanic" in terms of actual tickets sold. Admission prices are up more than 50 percent since "Titanic" came out in 1997, according to Media By Numbers. "The Dark Knight" would have to take in about $900 million to match the number of tickets that "Titanic" sold.

In terms of revenue alone, however, "The Dark Knight" will pass the original "Star Wars," which is No. 2 behind "Titanic" with $461 million, and such hits as "Shrek 2" ($436.5 million), "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" ($434.9 million) and "Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace" ($431.1 million).



AP

In this undated file image released by Warner Bros., Christian Bale is shown as Batman in a scene from "The Dark Knight." As Batman has gotten darker, his voice has gotten deeper, sparking discussion among critics.

Early anticipation over Heath Ledger's diabolical performance as Batman foe the Joker built to a frenzy in the months after the actor's death from an accidental prescription drug overdose in January.

A huge opening weekend was guaranteed, but the movie has sustained its audience from stellar reviews and audience buzz.

"The movie has grown in terms of its base audience from primarily what was conceived as a young male movie to a movie for everybody, from 8 to 80," Fellman said. "They're going to see it because of the reviews, they're going to see it because of the word of mouth. They're going just to see what it's all about, and they all like it."

"The Dark Knight" also has taken in $202.5 million overseas, opening in six more markets in August, among them Japan, France and Russia.

Universal's third "Mummy" flick sends Brendan Fraser's adventurer and his wife, played this time by Maria Bello, to China, where they battle a resurrected ancient ruler, played by Jet Li, and his undead minions.

Though it put up strong numbers, the new installment had the smallest opening of the three movies. "The Mummy" debuted with $43.4 million in 1999 and "The Mummy Returns" did $68.1 million in 2001. Along with its $42.5 million domestic haul, the new "Mummy" tale pulled in $59.5 million in 28 countries overseas.

"The Dark Knight" almost certainly took away some business from the "The Mummy," since both movies competed for the same action crowds.

"It looked like we could do somewhere between $45 and $50 million, but no one could have foreseen the juggernaut `The Dark Knight' has become," said Nikki Rocco, head of distribution for Universal.

Disney's "Swing Vote," about a presidential election that hinges on the lone ballot of an over-the-hill slacker played by Kevin Costner, opened weakly with $6.3 million, coming in at No. 6.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

MOVIE BUZZ
Bale's Batman voice too much?

NEW YORK (AP)—Though "The Dark Knight" has been a bona fide cultural event, boasting rave reviews and boffo box office, it hasn't been immune to criticism. Some have quibbled with its political undercurrents, and others have criticized a muddled theme.

But here's the critique most widely held: Why does Batman talk like the offspring of Clint Eastwood and a grizzly bear?

Donning the costume for the second time, Christian Bale has delved deeper into the lower registers. As Bruce Wayne, his voice is as smooth as his finely pressed suits. But once he puts the cape on, the transformation of his vocal chords is just as dramatic as his costume change.

Particularly when his rage boils over, Bale's Batman growls in an almost beastly fashion, reflecting how close he teeters between do-gooder and vengeance-crazed crusader.

"The Dark Knight" hauled in $43.8 million to rank as Hollywood's top movie for the third straight weekend, fending off "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor," which opened a close second with $42.5 million. It has earned $394.9 million in just 17 days, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Though much of the voice effect is Bale's own doing, under the guidance of director Christopher Nolan and supervising sound editor Richard King, the frequency of his Batman voice was modulated to exaggerate the effect.

Critics and fans have noticed.

"His Batman rasps his lines in a voice that's deeper and hammier than ever," said NPR's David Edelstein.

The New Yorker's David Denby praised the urgency of Bale's Batman, but lamented that he "delivers his lines in a hoarse voice with an unvarying inflection."

Reviewing the film for MSNBC, Alonso Duralde wrote that Bale's Batman in "Batman Begins" "sounded absurdly deep, like a 10-year-old putting on an `adult' voice to make prank phone calls. This time, Bale affects an eerie rasp, somewhat akin to Brenda Vaccaro doing a Miles Davis impression."

Before the similes run too far afield, it's worth considering where the concept of a throaty Batman comes from.

In his portrayal on the `60s "Batman" TV series, Adam West didn't alter his voice between Bruce Wayne and Batman. Decades later when Tim Burton brought "Batman" to the big screen in a much darker incarnation, Michael Keaton's inflection was notably - but not considerably - different from one to the other.

But it was a lesser-known actor who, a few years after Burton's film, made perhaps the most distinct imprint on Batman's voice. Kevin Conroy, as the voice of the animated Batman in various projects from 1992's "Batman: The Animated Series" right up until this year's "Batman: Gotham Knight," brought a darker, raspier vocalization to Batman.

Conroy has inhabit the role longer than anyone else and though animated voice-over work doesn't have the same cachet as feature film acting, there are quarters where Conroy is viewed as the best Batman of them all—certainly superior to Val Kilmer or George Clooney.

The animated series are notable because they drew on the DC Comics of Batman as envisioned by Frank Miller, whose work heavily informs "Batman Begins" and "The Dark Knight." (Bale and Nolan were unavailable to comment for this story.)

As Batman has gotten darker, his voice has gotten deeper. As some critics suggest, Bale and "The Dark Knight" may have reached a threshold, at least audibly.

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The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor
Fri & Sat 1:05 4:15 7:05 9:45
Sun thru Thurs 1:05 4:15 7:05
Brendan Fraser, Jet Li
Action, Adventure • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Doomed by a wronged sorceress, Zi Yuan, to spend eternity in suspended animation, China's ruthless Dragon Emperor and his 10,000 warriors have laid forgotten for eons, entombed in clay as a vast, silent Terracotta Army. But when dashing adventurer AlexO'Connell is tricked into awakening the ruler from eternal slumber, the reckless young archaeologist must seek the help of the only people who know more than he does about taking down the undead: his parents.

★ ★ ★

X Files: I Want to Believe
Fri & Sat 1:25 4:20 7:25 9:50
Sun thru Thurs 1:25 4:20 7:25
David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson
Thriller, Sci-Fi, Supernatural • Rated PG
Synopsis
The always-complicated relationship between Fox Mulder and Dana Scully moves in unexpected directions. Mulder continues his unshakable quest for the truth, and Scully, the passionate, ferociously intelligent physician, remains inextricably tied to Mulder's pursuits.

The Step Brothers
Fri & Sat 1:15 4:05 7:10 9:35
Sun thru Thurs 1:15 4:05 7:10
Will Ferrell, John C. Reilly
Comedy • Rated R
Synopsis
Brennan Huff, a sporadically employed thirty-nine-year-old, lives with his mother, Nancy. Dale Doback, a terminally unemployed forty-year-old lives with his father, Robert. When Robert and Nancy marry and move in together, Brennan and Dale are forced to live with each other as step brothers. As their narcissism and downright aggressive laziness threaten to tear the family apart, these two middle-aged, immature, overgrown boys will orchestrate an insane, elaborate plan to bring their parents back together. To pull it off, they must form an unlikely bond that maybe, just maybe, will finally get them out of the house.

Dark Knight
Fri & Sat 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
Sun thru Thurs 1:00 4:00 7:00
Christian Bale, Heath Ledger
Superhero Film, Action, Fantasy • Rated PG 13

Mamma Mia
Fri & Sat 1:20 4:10 7:20 9:55
Sun thru Thurs 1:20 4:10 7:20
Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan
Comedy, Musical Romance • Rated G

Hellboy II
Fri & Sat 1:10 4:30 7:15 9:40
Sun thru Thurs 1:10 4:30 7:15
Selma Blair and Ron Perlman
Monster Film, Action, Fantasy • Rated PG 13

Hancock
Fri & Sat 1:30 4:25 7:30 9:30
Sun thru Thurs 1:30 4:25 7:30
Will Smith, Charlize Theron
Action, Comedy • Rated PG 13

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Paris Hilton's mom takes offense at McCain's humor

AP

In this May 2, 2008 file photo, Kathy Hilton poses with her daughter Paris at an event in Los Angeles. In a short article posted Sunday Aug. 3, 2008, on the liberal Huffington Post Web site Kathy Hilton, a John McCain donor, registered her disapproval with the Republican presidential's latest campaign ad mocking Democrat Barack Obama with images of Paris and singer Britney Spears.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Paris Hilton's mother doesn't share John McCain's sense of humor.

McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, said last week that his campaign ad mocking Democrat Barack Obama with images of Hilton and singer Britney Spears was part of an attempt to inject humor into the presidential race.

On Sunday, Hilton's mother, Kathy Hilton, a McCain donor, registered her disapproval.

"It is a complete waste of the country's time and attention at the very moment when millions of people are losing their homes and their jobs," Kathy Hilton said in a short article posted on the liberal Huffington Post Web site. "And it is a completely frivolous way to choose the next president of the United States."

The ad plays on Obama's popularity by dismissing him as a mere celebrity, like Hilton and Spears. The Obama campaign has said the ad is proof that McCain would rather launch negative attacks than debate important issues.

McCain on Friday denied that his campaign had taken a negative turn, saying, "We think it's got a lot of humor in it, we're having fun and enjoying it."

Kathy Hilton, however, was unpersuaded, calling the ad "a complete waste of the money John McCain's contributors have donated to his campaign."

Kathy Hilton and her husband donated a total of $4,600 to McCain's campaign earlier this year.

Jonas Brothers, 'Gossip Girl' score teen awards

AP

Brothers Kevin, left, Nick, center, and Joe Jonas of The Jonas Brothers pose backstage at the 2008 Teen Choice Awards at Universal Studios in Los Angeles, Aug. 3, 2008.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Gossip Girl" has six more reasons to say OMG. And so do the Jonas Brothers.

Both the sudsy CW show about a group of tawdry prep-school students and the squeaky clean boy band swam away with multiple surfboard trophies at Sunday's 10th annual Teen Choice Awards. The awards, which were selected by over 30 million votes cast online by teenagers, honor celebrities in TV, film, music, sports and fashion.

"Gossip Girl" was lauded with six Teen Choice Awards: TV drama, breakout show, breakout male actor Chace Crawford, breakout female and TV drama actress Blake Lively and TV villain Ed Westwick, who plays the antagonistic Chuck Bass on the series.

"I feel like I'm still a teenager because I'm perpetually in high school," Crawford said backstage. "And I'm 23."

The awards show at the Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal Studios Hollywood was hosted by 15-year-old teen queen Miley Cyrus, who picked up three awards. Cyrus kicked off the ceremony with a performance of her new single "7 Things." She later grooved with friend Mandy Jiroux and their dance team M&M Cru as part of a dance-off with Adam Sevani and Jon Chu's dance troupe ACDC. Fergie and the audience later crowned Cyrus' crew as winner.

Throughout the taped ceremony, the Jonas Brothers appeared on stage to field questions from teenagers on Web cameras. At one point, the trio were strapped to harnesses and hoisted over the audience. The "Camp Rock" stars received six awards: choice breakout group, love song, music single, song of the summer, male red carpet fashion icons and male hotties.

Cyrus, the Jonas Brothers and "Gossip Girl" weren't the only attendees who sailed away with multiple awards. Will Smith stopped by to pick up three surfboard trophies—one for "Hancock" and two for "I Am Legend." Chris Brown accepted five music awards: choice music male artist, R&B artist, R&B track, rap/hip-hop track and music hook-up for his Jordin Sparks duet "No Air."

Other winners included "The Hills" star Lauren Conrad as choice TV female reality star, "Heroes" star Hayden Panettiere as choice TV action-adventure actress and David Beckham as choice male athlete. The soccer player's youngest son, Cruz, stole his father's thunder by unleashing a spontaneous break dancing routine on stage following his pop's acceptance speech.

AP

Hong Kong movie star Chow Yun-Fat, left, Chinese Movie star Gong Li, center, and Hollywood star John Cusack pose for photographers during a press conference about their movie " Shanghai" in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday, August 2, 2008.

Cusack calls 'Shanghai' unique opportunity

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Known for alternating between mainstream Hollywood and independent films, John Cusack says his latest movie "Shanghai" is a rare middle ground between the two genres.

Speaking at a set visit in Bangkok on Saturday, the 42-year-old star of movies like "Serendipity" and "Being John Malkovich" called "Shanghai" a unique project that combines the artistry of independent film with the resources of a commercial movie.

"To do something that has a big budget, a great scope with a great director and great actors that has the quality and level of writing and the level of production design ... is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Cusack said.

Shot in London and Bangkok, "Shanghai" is budgeted at more than $10 million—still small by Hollywood standards but big for an Asian production.

Cusack said once he heard the filmmakers were interested in casting him, he aggressively lobbied for the part.

"Any actor in his right mind would want to do this film—would die to do it," he said.

In "Shanghai," Cusack plays an American intelligence official who investigates a friend's death in Japanese-occupied Shanghai in 1941 in the months before the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the U.S. into World War II. The movie also features Hong Kong's Chow Yun-fat, Chinese actress Gong Li and Japan's Ken Watanabe.

Cheating is rampant both in and out of the classroom

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR READERS: When I printed the letter about cheating in school from "Valedictorian Contender" on May 27, my staff and I were deluged with mail. If you're interested in what folks had to say, here is a sample:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I recently retired from teaching at a highly rated, competitive Midwestern public school. Cheating was rampant, from copying homework to text-messaging during tests in the classroom. When confronted, the cheaters were surprised and usually asserted that "everyone else does it." And they were right.

Cheating occurs in the classroom, in sports, in extra-curricular activities and in the hallways, and has become more acceptable among students than ever before. Teachers are practically powerless to control it; administrators seem to have no idea how to handle it. Parents don't want to get involved for fear of angering their children, and a strong leader may be "asked" to back down from pursuing it.

My husband and I tried many times to make students understand that what they were doing or thinking was wrong and needed to be corrected, only to be met with an incredulous stare, a sneer perhaps, and then, "Can I go now?" We began asking ourselves that same question and realized last year that WE "could go now"—and we did. More of our time was spent trying to teach moral values and ethics and less was spent on the required curriculum.

You were right when you said people's codes of ethics have taken a nosedive in the last decade. It's rampant in every aspect of life as you mentioned. But when it's rampant in our schools, it eliminates any chance of fixing it for coming generations.

RETIRED IN THE MIDWEST

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: In recent years it seems cheating is encouraged by parents. I have seen it when teaching Sunday school to seventh-graders. The father of one of the Scouts in our local Scout troop even called cheating "just a form of competitive advantage."

For a long time I have carried a quote in my wallet that is my favorite saying: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." The person who said it was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

TONY S., NEW MILFORD, CONN.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: After teaching in public and private schools for 44 years, I believe that most students are honest the majority of the time. However, I would advise "Valedictorian" to pay attention. Make mental notes of the names of her classmates who cheat every chance they get. Do not forget who they are. She will be meeting them all the rest of her life.

If they go into business, shop elsewhere. If they become bankers, put your money elsewhere. If they go into the service industries, get your car or your teeth repaired somewhere else.

Above all, do not let your siblings marry one of them—marriage is the biggest "test" of all.

E.B., LINDEN, ALA.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Your reply to "Valedictorian" was, as usual, on target. The notion of (personal) responsibility is another "R" that should be taught in school.

WAY TO GO IN MONTANA

DEAR WAY TO GO: Thank you for the kind words, but I beg to differ. Responsibility for one's actions should be taught in the home, by example, by the parents. Readers, more on this tomorrow.

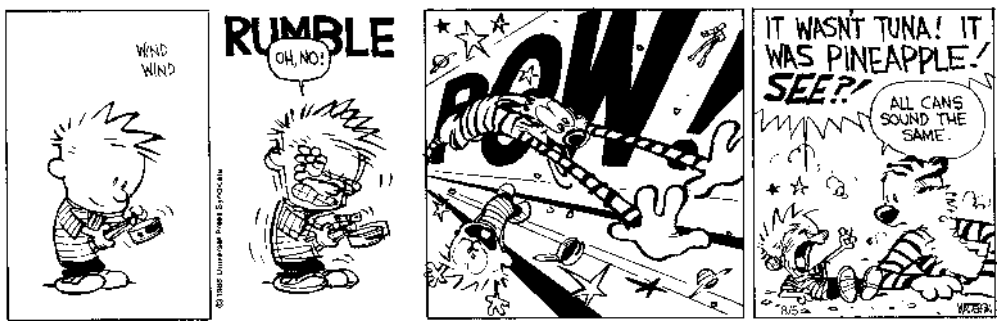
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

OOH, FLOWERS!
YEAH, I GOT THEM FROM MY LATIN DANCE INSTRUCTOR, RAOUL
OH...
KIDDING! THEY'RE FOR YOU, HON
OH!
I HAVEN'T TANGOED SINCE THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

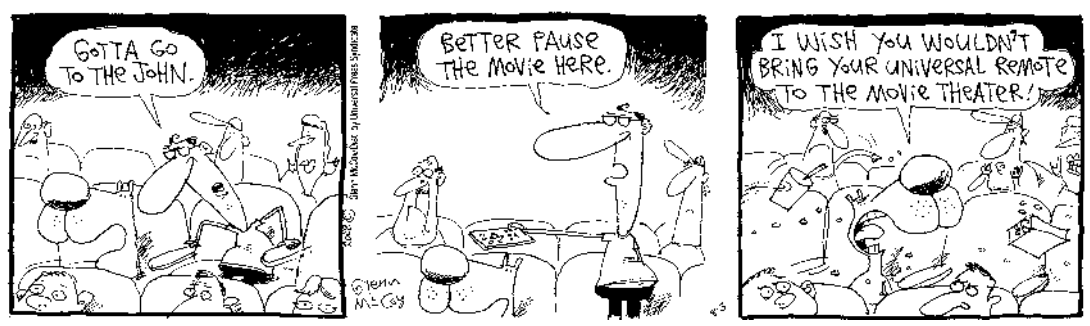
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

Dear Adam@Home, What's the most satisfying aspect to working at home?
KATY AND CLAYTON! KNOCK IT OFF UP THERE! I'M TRYING TO WORK!!
Knowing the positive influence a full-time at-home parent has.
CLICK CLICK CLICK

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

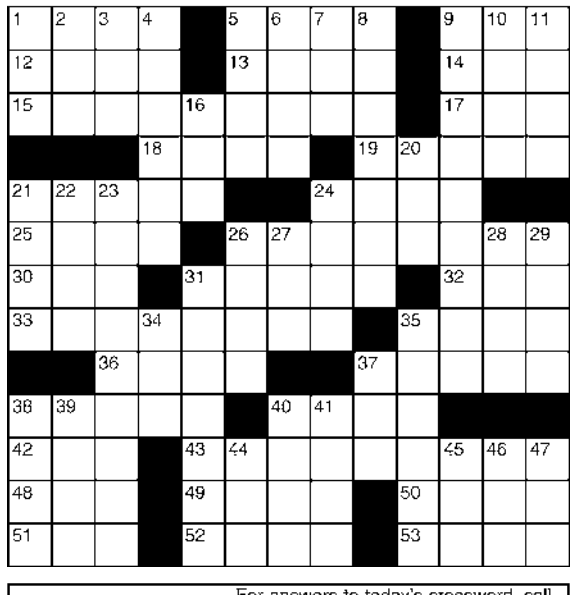
ACROSS
1 Favorable votes
5 Queue
9 Arrow launcher
12 St. Louis landmark
13 Mountain goat
14 Guitar's kin
15 "God Bless America" singer
17 U.S. spy org.
18 Benevolent
19 Singer Clay
21 Presbyter
24 Topic (Abbr.)
25 Authentic
26 Arness oater
30 Gun the engine
31 One in a million, e.g.?
32 Zero
33 Ceiling window
35 Expression
36 "Eat at —"
37 Round, thin objects
38 Production number?
40 Continue
42 Samovar
43 "Hancock" star
48 Time of your life?
49 Scored 100 on
50 Top-notch
51 "Indeed"
52 Longings
53 Crazy

DOWN
1 Tibetan beast
2 Mound stat
3 Performance
4 Money of Israel
5 Describe
6 Footnote abbr.
7 Butterfly catcher
8 Wear out
9 Star of many 1930s westerns
10 Tom Joad, e.g.
11 Break a habit, maybe
16 Round Table address
20 "Big Blue"
21 Messes up
22 Welsh emblem
23 One of the Monkees
24 Fit of peevishness
26 Entertainer's jobs
27 "Yecch!"
28 Shatner role
29 "Desire Under the —"
31 Become extinct
34 Parcel of land
35 Friend of Dorothy
37 Two, in Tijuana
38 Harbor structure
39 Desire
40 Singer Campbell
41 Automaker Ransom Eli —
44 Lemieux milieu
45 Debtor's letters
46 Stick with a kick
47 Cock and bull?

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	E	E	F	■	A	I	R	■	H	U	L	L
A	L	L	I	A	N	C	E	■	A	R	I	A
D	O	M	E	S	T	I	C	■	I	D	E	M
■	■	■	S	H	E	■	K	O	R	U	N	A
H	E	F	T	Y	■	T	O	D	D	■	■	■
O	K	R	A	■	P	A	N	D	O	R	A	■
W	E	E	■	L	A	M	E	S	■	E	R	A
■	D	E	F	I	N	E	D	■	E	A	I	T
■	■	■	A	L	C	S	■	H	O	R	D	C
H	E	H	I	L	■	S	O	U	■	■	■	■
O	V	E	N	■	I	M	P	O	R	T	E	D
B	E	N	T	■	N	E	A	P	T	I	D	E
E	N	D	S	■	G	A	S	■	H	E	S	S

Yesterday's answer 8-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kajol, 33; Adam Yauch, 44; Maureen McCormick, 52; Neil Armstrong, 78

Happy Birthday: Something has to change in order for you to find your way. You can't keep spinning in the same circle. Make a list of all the things you really don't like about your life and turn it into a to-do list. Have the most important changes started by year's end and next year can be one of the most important of your life. Your numbers are 13, 20, 23, 33, 39, 42

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Travel, dealing with foreigners and discussing new ways of doing old things will help you figure out a way to get ahead. A chance to talk about future plans with a love interest will enable you to make decisions you were reluctant to make in the past. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Put your effort into professional gains and taking better care of you. Remove yourself from whatever dilemma in which you have been engulfed. Distance yourself from someone who is trouble. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You'll get the luck of the draw today. Love is in the picture and emotional encounters will lead to an exciting adventure. A sudden turn of events may need your help to set things straight. Your fast action will leave an impression. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't forget what's important or you may put someone's nose out of joint. Tend to partnerships and the people you are responsible for first. Guard against becoming overwhelmed and unable to follow through. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Travel, networking and finding your niche should all go hand-in-hand. Love is on the rise and a change of plans will lead to an unusual time spent with someone who captures your attention. Don't be afraid to be forceful and outspoken. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Deal with superiors, red tape and paperwork that will help you put a legal, financial or health matter to rest. Stick to a goal and a budget. A powerful connection with someone you meet will lead to an adventure. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Set your sights on helping others. Love is on the rise and a chance meeting will make you realize how much you have and what you want to do next. Overreacting and overspending will cause worry and stress. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Someone is waiting for you to screw up so he or she can blame you. Focus on doing things a little differently so no one will catch on to your plans before you get a chance to launch them. Question anything you find odd. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Get your responsibilities out of the way so you can have a bit of fun. Love, adventure and exciting times are in clear view. Travel to whatever destination will bring you the biggest thrill but don't take unnecessary risks. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't lean on someone who has his or her own trouble. If you focus on helping out instead of putting demands on others, you will be much further ahead. Sudden good fortune is heading your way. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Be precise in what you say and do and you can keep things running smoothly. If you refuse to address issues head on, you will make matters worse. Don't pay too much for something. If it's not within budget, take a pass. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't give in to demands being put on you by children, elders or a partner who isn't being fair. Someone you work with will have a greater interest in you than you realize. Be careful not to lead someone on unintentionally. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, sophisticated and intelligent. You are practical and insist on getting your way and doing things according to your plan.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5		4				3	
4								7
		7	6	3	8	9		
		4		9		5		8
		1		2		6		
3		8		6		4		
		2	1	4	3	7		
7								1
	4				7		9	

Difficulty Level ★★ 8/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	7	9	6	2	1	3	4	5
1	2	4	9	3	5	6	7	8
3	5	6	7	4	8	2	1	9
7	8	5	2	9	3	4	6	1
6	4	1	5	8	7	9	2	3
9	3	2	4	1	6	8	5	7
4	9	8	1	5	2	7	3	6
5	6	3	8	7	4	1	9	2
2	1	7	3	6	9	5	8	4

Difficulty Level ★ 8/04

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CRIBS **Solution: 6 letters**

T	K	T	E	Z	I	S	O	U	N	D	L	Y	R	H
P	S	C	H	E	C	K	S	S	E	R	T	T	A	M
O	I	E	O	H	T	O	O	M	S	E	H	N	L	U
S	S	L	R	M	E	T	A	L	F	E	D	A	U	S
I	L	E	L	T	M	A	D	A	I	C	C	E	G	I
T	E	S	D	O	O	A	S	G	R	C	M	U	E	C
I	E	C	R	I	W	O	H	A	E	E	M	A	R	F
O	P	R	M	O	S	T	F	S	H	E	E	T	S	E
N	L	E	B	A	L	T	S	T	E	P	L	A	Y	T
P	R	W	B	J	E	O	C	A	F	L	A	T	O	(B)
R	A	S	A	D	R	R	C	N	I	Y	I	D	(A)	R
A	I	N	S	I	A	U	D	D	T	L	D	(B)	S	O
I	S	T	E	D	Q	U	I	L	T	L	(Y)	D	O	O
L	E	S	L	L	B	U	M	P	E	R	S	T	A	M
S	D	E	D	I	S	P	O	R	D	L	I	U	B	C

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Accessories, Baby, Base, Build, Bumper, Caddy, Check, Colors, Cradle, Dream, Drop Side, Fitted, Footrest, Frame, Hammock, Handcrafted, Height, Label, Mattress, Metal, Mobiles, Music, Pads, Panels, Pillow, Play, Position, Quilt, Rails, Raised, Regular, Room, Safety, Screws, Secure, Select, Sets, Sheets, Sides, Size, Sleep, Smooth, Soundly, Stand, Theme, Tilt, Toddler

Yesterday's Answer: Pickles

Treasury 4 is available to order by sending check or money order for $13.95 plus $2.75 postage and handling ($16.70 total), U.S. funds only for the first volume, $1.50 each additional volume, to Universal Press Syndicate Attn: Wonderword, 4520 Main St. Kansas City, Mo 64111 or call toll free 1 800 255 6734, ext. 6606. Order online at puzzles.com

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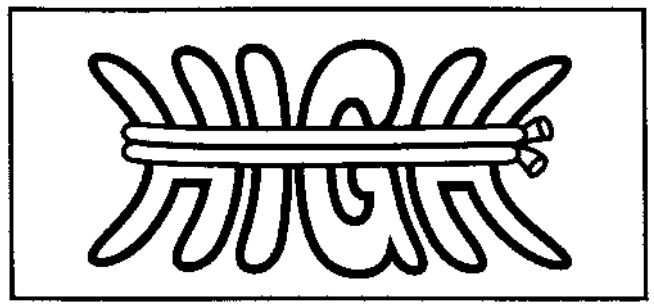
Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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Find today's solution in this section

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SUNDAY
Saipan Trib
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 195
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No discount on Color Rates. No contract plan necessary
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Singh captures 1st World Golf Championship

AKRON, Ohio (AP)—Vijay Singh nearly threw away the Bridgestone Invitational by missing three putts inside 8 feet on the back nine at Firestone. He won his first World Golf Championship by making the last one, which was all that mattered.

Singh ended an 0-for-34 drought on the PGA Tour by swirling in a 3 1/2-foot par putt on the final hole Sunday to close with a 2-under 68 for a one-shot victory over Lee Westwood and Stuart Appleby.

"What a relief," Singh said. "I didn't think I could finish it there at the end."

As shaky as Singh looked down the stretch, Phil Mickelson was even worse. Lefty played bogey-free through the first 14 holes to build a one-shot lead, then threw it away by making three bogeys from the bunker on the final four holes to shoot 70, two shots behind.

"It wasn't a good finish for me, but I played really well today," Mickelson said. "I'm turning 63s and 64s into 70s, and that's kind of what happened today. I couldn't get any putts to go in, then in the end, I made some bogeys."

So did Singh.

According to tour statistics, Singh was 9-of-19 on putts from 4 to 8 feet during the tournament, and the last thing he wanted was to face another attempt. But he left his 30-foot birdie putt well short of the hole, and was relieved to see gravity pull the ball into the hole.

"I didn't want to have a 4-footer," he said. "I was kind of sweating it. But I'm glad it went in."

Singh had not won on U.S. soil since the Arnold Palmer Invitational in March 2007, and twice this year he blew 54-hole leads at Pebble Beach and Bay Hill. But he finally got it done, winning for the 32nd time on the PGA Tour.

After falling out of the top 10, the victory is expected to move him up to No. 4 in the world.

Singh finished at 10-under 270 and earned $1.35 million for his first WGC title.

Westwood, who could have moved up to No. 4 in the world with his first U.S. title in 10 years, rallied from a five-shot deficit with 11 holes to play to get within one of the lead. But he missed a 7-foot birdie on the 17th, and his 15-foot birdie putt from the fringe on the 18th to tie for the lead was left all the way. He closed with a 69.

An equally impressive rally belonged to Appleby, the only player to compete in all 29 of these WGC events since they began in 1999. He was seemingly out of the picture until a 30-foot birdie on the 16th, a 3-foot birdie on the 17th and an 18-foot birdie attempt on the final hole that just stayed right of the cup. He shot 68.

"I had a putt for what I thought would get me into a playoff," Appleby said. "I hit the best putt I could have hit without it going in."

Mickelson and Retief Goosen (67) tied for fourth, while Darren Clarke made a strong showing in his first U.S. tournament since the PGA Championship last year. Clarke closed with a 67 to tie for sixth with Peter Lonard (66).

Singh broke out of a three-way tie with Westwood and Mickelson by making four birdies in a five-hole stretch on the front nine, starting with a two-putt birdie from about 18 feet on the second hole, concluding with an approach to tap-in range on the sixth.

Westwood seemingly took himself out of contention on the par-3 seventh. He barely caught the bunker on the right side of the green, then blasted out short, leaving the ball in the sand. He barely got the next one out and took double bogey. And when Singh made a terrific flop shot with one foot in the sand to save par, he was five shots ahead of Westwood and two clear of Mickelson.

The tournament wasn't over, however. It was just starting to get interesting.

Mickelson hit from the left rough to inches of the hole on the 11th for a birdie. That gave him the lead when Singh, playing in the group behind him, spun a wedge back 40 feet and three-putted from the fringe.

"I started missing 5- and 6-footers," Singh said. "I tried to hit it as close as possible so I didn't leave myself any putts."

It was a grind the rest of the day for Singh. He answered with a tee shot to 2 feet for birdie and a share of the lead, then found a bunker from the 13th fairway and badly missed an 8-footer for par.

With a chance to seize control on the 16th, Singh's 4-foot birdie putt never hit the cup. Again in control with a sand wedge in his hand on the 17th fairway, Singh spun it back too far again, this time 25 feet away. He left that 4 feet short, and finally coaxed one in.

Westwood, five behind with 11 holes to play, was within one shot until he bogeyed the 14th by electing to hit putter from 60 feet through about 15 feet of fairway, leaving that 20 feet short and taking bogey that turned out to be the difference.

"I just couldn't picture a chip from there," Westwood said. "The fringe ended up being a lot slower. The first time I really putted through the fringe all week. The putt just seemed like the right shot at the time."

The victory came at a perfect time for Singh, who can take loads of confidence—from winning, not so much his putting—to the PGA Championship next week at Oakland Hills.

AP

Vijay Singh, from Fiji, holds up the trophy after winning the World Golf Championships tournament at Firestone Country Club Sunday, Aug. 3, 2008, in Akron, Ohio.

Pack prez Murphy says team will welcome Favre back

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—Brett Favre is back. It remains to be seen whether he'll still be the leader of the Pack.

The Green Bay Packers reluctantly embraced Favre's forced return to the football field Sunday, after failing to come to a financial agreement that would manage to make Favre happy while staying retired.

And while it's not yet clear what role Favre will play once he reports to Packers camp Monday, Aaron Rodgers says he's ready for a potential competition with Favre after serving as his backup for three seasons.

"I'm a competitor. I'm going to compete," Rodgers said after a scrimmage Sunday night. "This isn't going to be easy. It's going to be a dogfight. And I know if they do open it up to competition, not a lot of people give me a chance, but I believe in myself and I'm going to be the best I can be and let coach decide from there."

Packers coach Mike McCarthy said he hasn't decided what direction his quarterback situation will take. Given Favre's track record of waffling on his football future, McCarthy first wants to talk to Favre on Monday before he makes any decision on opening the job up to competition.

"There have been no promises," McCarthy said. "Once again, there has been indecision throughout Brett's path back here to Green Bay. It's important for us to sit down and communicate."

The NFL announced Sunday that Favre will be reinstated and added to the Packers' active roster on Monday. Commissioner Roger Goodell had held off on granting Favre's request for reinstatement for nearly a week, hoping Favre and the team could resolve their standoff.

"Although we built this year around the assumption that Brett meant what he said about retiring, Brett is coming back," said team president and CEO Mark Murphy. "We will welcome him back and turn this situation to our advantage."

A private plane carrying Favre, wife Deanna and agent James "Bus" Cook arrived in Green Bay shortly after 8 p.m. EDT Sunday night. Favre exited the plane and waved to a crowd of a few hundred fans gathered at the airport—in a severe lightning storm, no less—before driving off in an SUV.

The reinstatement will become effective at 1 p.m. EDT Monday, when Favre will be added to the Packers' active roster. By reinstating Favre, Goodell is following through on a recent promise to force action.

"I'm happy," veteran receiver Donald Driver said. "I'm excited. It's good to have him back in the house."

Earlier this week, the team offered Favre a long-term, multi-million-dollar marketing agreement that likely would have kept him retired. But Favre's decision to report to camp makes such an agreement far less likely.

A trade remains a possibility. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported on its Web site late Sunday night that the Packers have had preliminary contact with the Vikings on a potential trade for Favre.

"Frankly, Brett's change of mind put us in a very difficult spot," Murphy said in a statement released by the team. "We now will revise many actions and assumptions about our long-term future, all predicated on Brett's decision last March to retire.

"As a result of his decision, we invested considerably in a new and different future without Brett and we were obviously moving in that direction. That's why this wasn't easy. Having crossed the Rubicon once when Brett decided to retire, it's very difficult to reorient our plans and cross it again in the opposite direction—but we'll put this to our advantage."

Could reorienting their plans include a competition between Favre and Aaron Rodgers for the starting job? Team officials have maintained that if Favre returned to the Packers, it would be in some role other than as the starter—a job that belonged to Rodgers.

In his statement, Murphy said only that coach Mike McCarthy would "talk to the team and the quarterbacks about the plan moving forward, and after he has done that we will share it publicly."

Rodgers had a rough night in the Packers' annual "Family Night" scrimmage at Lambeau Field on Sunday night, as a few boos were mixed in with enthusiastic cheers from the crowd of 56,600 when he was introduced.

"Yeah, I take it personally," Rodgers said of the fan reaction. "But like I said, it's not the first time and it won't be the last time."

Rodgers hit his first pass of the night to Donald Driver, and drew a pass interference penalty on a deep pass to Driver on the next play. He then missed on his next six attempts, including several balls that seemed to bounce off receivers' hands.

After he threw another three incompletions to begin a simulated two-minute drill, Rodgers appeared to be heating up until he threw an interception in the end zone to safety Aaron Rouse.

McCarthy said Rodgers was "solid," and the offense struggled as a unit.

The Packers do not have another scheduled public practice until Tuesday afternoon. Favre's arrival in training camp could cause a major disruption to the team, although may not begin practicing with the rest of the team right away.

Favre retired in March but has been having second thoughts. Team officials have insisted in recent weeks that they are moving on with Rodgers, though, causing tensions to rise between Favre and the team.

Team officials publicly have ruled out releasing Favre, fearing he would immediately sign with division rival Minnesota.

McCarthy has said the Packers had a plan in place should Favre report to camp. He first would have to pass a physical exam and a conditioning test, then may be limited to individual drills.

Rodgers remains the starter—for now, anyway.

"If we played a game tomorrow, Aaron Rodgers would be the starting quarterback," McCarthy said. "I'm not going to change any direction that we've gone with this football team based on the information I have here today. That's part of our conversation tomorrow, and we have all the confidence in the world in Aaron."

Liriano leads Twins in 6-2 victory over Cleveland

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Francisco Liriano threw six scoreless innings in his return to the Minnesota rotation Sunday, helping the Twins move into first in the American League Central with a 6-2 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

Denard Span and Brendan Harris homered for Minnesota, which moved a half-game ahead of the White Sox. Chicago lost 14-3 at Kansas City.

Liriano missed all of last season after Tommy John surgery and went 0-3 with an 11.32 ERA in three starts before being sent down in April. He dominated at Triple-A Rochester, going 10-0 with a 2.67 ERA in his last 11 starts, and was openly frustrated as the Twins waited until Friday to call him up.

Span went 2-for-4, and Nick Punto and Mike Lamb each had run-scoring triples for the Minnesota.

After breezing through two innings on 19 pitches, Liriano was tested in the third, facing a bases-loaded situation after two walks and a throwing error by shortstop Harris. Liriano threw 34 pitches in the inning but struck out Ben Francisco to end the threat.

AP

Minnesota Twins' Francisco Liriano pitches against the Cleveland Indians in the second inning of a baseball game on Sunday, Aug. 3, 2008 in Minneapolis. Liriano pitched six shutout innings in the Twins' 6-2 win.

Rays 6, Tigers 5, 10 innings

At St. Petersburg, Florida, Carl Crawford hit a tying RBI single in the 10th inning and Carlos Pena drew a game-ending, bases-loaded walk to give AL East-leading Tampa Bay a victory of Detroit.

Tampa Bay took advantage of Fernando Rodney's wildness to put together the winning rally. Pinch-hitter Willy Aybar led off with a walk, bringing Jason Bartlett to the plate. Bartlett squared to bunt and left when Rodney (0-3) plunked him on his right index finger.

Shawn Riggans batted for Bartlett, and Rodney hit him with the next pitch.

Both runners advanced on Akinori Iwamura's sacrifice and B.J. Upton walked before Crawford hit a tying single into left field. One out later, Pena won it when took a 3-2 pitch to force in the winning run.

Yankees 14, Angels 9

At New York, Xavier Nady homered and had a career-high six RBIs, rallying New York past sloppy Los Angeles in a wild, back-and-forth game.

Mark Teixeira hit a go-ahead grand slam in the eighth inning for his first home run with Los Angeles, but New York took advantage of uncharacteristically poor defense by the Angels to score six times in the bottom half and complete its largest comeback of the season.

Royals 14, White Sox 3

At Kansas City, Missouri, Mike Aviles went 4-for-4 with a home run, Zack Greinke pitched well into the seventh inning, and Kansas City defeated Chicago in a game featuring five ejections.

There was a bench-clearing brawl in the fifth inning when Royals catcher Miguel Olivo was hit by a pitch from D.J. Carrasco and charged the mound. Olivo, Carrasco and White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen were sent to the clubhouse once order was restored.

Red Sox 5, Athletics 2

At Boston, Jed Lowrie's two-run triple highlighted a three-run fourth inning that helped Daisuke Matsuzaka to his 12th win and Boston completed a three-game sweep of Oakland.

Matsuzaka (12-2), allowed two runs, four hits, walked two and struck out eight in six innings.

Daric Barton hit a two-run homer for the Athletics, who lost their sixth straight and 15th in 17 games.

Mariners 8, Orioles 4

At Seattle, Raul Ibanez's two-run single off reliever Jamie Walker capped a three-run seventh inning to help Seattle down Baltimore and snap a seven-game home losing streak.

Ibanez finished with three RBIs as the Mariners avoided being swept at home by the Orioles for the first time since 1997.

J.J. Putz (3-4) pitched 1 1-3 scoreless innings for the victory, as he continues working back into form after missing more than a month with a hyperextended right elbow.

Rangers 8, Blue Jays 4

At Arlington, Texas, Gerald Laird homered twice and drove in four runs as Texas beat Toronto.

Laird had his third career multihomer game, second this season, with two-run shots in the fourth and fifth innings.

Texas starter Luis Mendoza (3-4) recovered from a three-run first inning to allow four runs and six hits in seven innings. Mendoza struck out two and walked one in his 12th major league start, retiring his final nine batters.

Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 3

At Los Angeles, Manny Ramirez finished off his first series with the Los Angeles Dodgers on a tear, going 4-for-5 with a homer and three RBIs in a victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks.

The Dodgers salvaged a split of the four-game series and sliced Arizona's NL West lead to one game.

Ramirez hit an RBI single in the first inning, doubled in a run in the second and went deep in the fifth for career homer No. 512, passing Mel Ott and moving into a tie with Eddie Mathews and Ernie Banks for 20th place.

Ramirez is 8-for-13 with five RBIs in three games since Thursday's three-way trade with Boston and Pittsburgh.

Astros 4, Mets 0

At Houston, Ty Wigginton homered and Houston completed its first three-game sweep New York since September 1993.

Hunter Pence and Humberto Quintero added RBI doubles and Randy Wolf (7-10) won his home debut for the Astros, who've won six of their past seven games.

Jose Valverde shut out the Mets in the ninth. Houston's bullpen did not allow a run in 11 innings in the series.

Rockies 3, Marlins 2

At Miami, pinch-hitter Seth Smith drove in the winning run with a single in the ninth inning, lifting Colorado.

Florida reliever Joe Nelson walked Chris Iannetta to lead off the ninth. Iannetta was replaced by pinch-runner Cory Sullivan, who stole second. Nelson (2-1) intentionally walked Brad Hawpe, then Smith singled up the middle to score Sullivan and give the Rockies their first lead.

Braves 5, Brewers 0

At Atlanta, Jorge Campillo shut out Milwaukee for seven innings and Atlanta beat Ben Sheets and the Brewers to avoid a series sweep.

Sheets (10-5) gave up six hits, including four doubles, and three runs with three walks and four strikeouts in six innings. He gave up only two earned runs but fell to 1-4 in seven starts since a dominant 4-1 complete-game victory in Atlanta on June 24.

The loss snapped the Brewers' nine-game road winning streak, which tied for the longest in franchise history.

Campillo (6-4) improved to 3-0 in his past five starts.

Nationals 4, Reds 2

At Washington, the Nationals completed only their second sweep of the year, jumping ahead with a four-run first inning in a victory over Cincinnati.

Rookie Collin Balester (2-3) allowed one run in 5 1-3 innings and Lastings Milledge hit his ninth home run for the Nationals, who were mired in a nine-game losing streak before outscoring the Reds 19-10 over three games. Austin Kearns had three hits against his former team.

Johnny Cueto (7-11) took the loss for the Reds.

Cubs 8, Pirates 5

At Chicago, Reed Johnson and Alfonso Soriano hit back-to-back homers in the eighth, and Chicago escaped with a victory over Pittsburgh after blowing a three-run lead in the top half of the inning.

The home runs lifted the Cubs to their seventh win in eight games and capped a strange afternoon that saw Carlos Zambrano leave after five strong innings even though he apparently was not hurt.

Chad Gaudin (3-1) got the win even though he allowed the tying two-run homer to Andy LaRoche in the eighth.

Craig Hansen (0-1) took the loss for Pittsburgh.

Padres 4, Giants 1

At San Diego, Greg Maddux drove in a run and pitched six strong innings for his 352nd career victory, leading San Diego past San Francisco.

Maddux (5-8) won his second straight after having gone through a career-high 14-game winless streak since victory No. 350 on May 10 against Colorado.

The 42-year-old Maddux allowed one run on two hits and retired the final 10 batters he faced before Mike Adams, Heath Bell and Trevor Hoffman finished the combined four-hitter.

Kevin Correia (2-6) took the loss for San Francisco.

Phillies 5, Cardinals 4

At St. Louis, Shane Victorino's three-run home run capped a four-run eighth inning against a vulnerable St. Louis bullpen, and Philadelphia's Brad Lidge survived a shaky ninth to stay perfect in save situations.

Chase Utley added his 28th homer for the Phillies, who have gone deep in 12 straight games and lead the majors with 157 homers.

Troy Glaus homered off the left-field foul pole to start the ninth against Lidge. The Cardinals then loaded the bases with one out. But Lidge wriggled off the hook by striking out rookies Nick Stavinoha and Joe Mather for his 28th save in 28 chances, and 31st in a row dating to Sept. 25, 2007, at Cincinnati.

Chad Durbin (4-2) got the victory despite allowing a run on two hits and a walk in one inning.

Ryan Ludwick hit his fourth homer in eight at-bats and Todd Wellemeyer threw four-hit ball into the seventh for the Cardinals.

Olympic protests over Beijing evictions

BEIJING (AP)—About 20 people angry about being evicted from their homes in central Beijing demonstrated Monday not far from Tiananmen Square, saying the Olympics should not curb their legal rights.

Uniformed police quickly surrounded the residential street where AP Television News video showed the group shouting about being kicked out of their homes and not getting proper compensation.

"We don't oppose the Olympics. But it's wrong for them to demolish our house. It's wrong," said protester Liu Fumei. AP Television News footage showed her screaming and scuffling with women in civilian clothes.

The police officers did not interfere, but women who said they were members of a neighborhood committee pushed and led the protesters away from the area. Neighborhood committees are not officially part of the government but work closely with police and other departments.

China is sensitive to any public criticism of the Beijing Olympics, which begin Friday, and has stationed security agents throughout the city to watch for signs of unrest. Demonstrations in and near Tiananmen Square are rare and generally stopped quickly by police.

It was not clear where the protesters were taken, and whether they were detained. A duty officer in the Beijing police news office said he did not know what happened to them.

A large crowd of onlookers gathered to watch the protest in the historic Qianmen district just south of Tiananmen Square, one of Beijing's most famous landmarks where large pro-democracy protests were held in 1989. Authorities cracked down hard on those protesters.

Monday's demonstrators were unhappy about being evicted from their former homes in the area to make way for redevelopment. The area is being rebuilt into a commercial strip with businesses such as Nike, Starbucks and Rolex, and it is scheduled to open on Thursday.

"Developers shouldn't use the Olympics to take our homes. And we cannot stop protecting our rights because of the Olympics," protester Ma Xiulan told AP Television News.

Beijing carried out a $40 billion makeover in preparation for the Olympics, and many older homes were razed as part of the modernization campaign.

The protesters' complaints are not unique. Residents who are displaced to make way for new development without being paid enough compensation to buy new homes have protested in cities throughout the country.

NMI

From Page 28

ter. Most likely her main competition will be Tarani Kamoe, with whom she played the three finals during their December trip to New Zealand," he said.

Race also shared that ITF is also impressed with the play of Rafael Jones and Christian Miller and he wouldn't be surprised if the two make waves in Fiji.

"Dan believes that Raffy and Christian will do really well this year. Most of the better boys from last year moved up to the 18s. I think they'll be in the Top 6. If they make the Top 4 that will be really excellent and they would be invited to play in New Zealand in December."

Aside from Heo, Arriola, Minor, Jones, and Miller, also going to Fiji is Dina Jones. A seventh CNMI bet, James Camacho, will not be going because of school.

"Unfortunately James apparently was unable to get his school to allow him to go and compete. This is a real shame as he earned the right to go and hopefully someday he will play for the CNMI in international competition, but for him this is a superb development opportunity that he is missing," he said.

Race also took the opportunity to thank the parents of the players for preparing them for the 2008 POJC set for Aug. 13 to 17.

"I think that this is the most prepared the kids going to Fiji have ever been. The parents have done a terrific job of organizing practices and keeping the kids on the court during my time off-island."

DOZENS

From Page 28

director general David Howman said. "Many countries now have realized that the shame that falls upon them from a positive test at the games themselves is something they want to avoid, so they put their athletes through rigorous testing before they leave."

Surprise out-of-competition controls are considered the most effective way of catching dopers, although many can still slip through the net by evading the system or using undetectable substances.

The International Olympic Committee and WADA have worked with international sports federations to step up the number of pre-games tests and collaborate on intelligence gathering with law enforcement agencies to go after doping suspects.

"This is not a trend," IOC president Jacques Rogge said. "It's a deliberate policy."

Among the athletes who will miss the Beijing Games because of doping cases:

■ 11 Greek weightlifters

■ The entire 11-member Bulgarian weightlifting team

■ American swimmer Jessica Hardy

■ Italian fencer Andrea Baldini and cyclist Marta Bastianelli

■ Danish mountain bike champion Peter Riis Andersen

■ Chinese race walker Song Hongjuan, swimmer Ouyang Kunpeng and wrestler Luo Meng

■ Romanian middle distance runners Liliana Popescu, Elena Antoci and Cristina Vasiloiu

In one of the most dramatic cases of all, seven female Russian track and field athletes—including five Olympians—were suspended by the IAAF last Thursday for allegedly substituting their urine for someone else's to beat doping controls. The group included Yelena Soboleva, a world record holder and gold medal favorite in the 800 and 1,500 meters, and two-time world 1,500 champion Tatyana Tomashova.

Some big names have been barred from Beijing for earlier doping offenses. American sprinter Justin Gatlin, the 2004 Olympic champion in the 100, lost an appeal to overturn a ban for a second drug violation in 2006. Former European 100 champion Dwain Chambers of Britain, who tested positive for steroids in 2003, failed to rescind a lifetime Olympic ban.

The IOC, meanwhile, is considering banning Greek sprinter Katerina Thanou from Beijing because she eluded drug tests before the 2004 Athens Games and received a two-year suspension.

Howman said the system for catching cheaters is becoming more effective as countries enforce the World Anti-Doping Code, which went into effect four years ago and sets out global rules for testing and sanctions.

"It's taken quite a while for the countries to put it into practice," he said. "Now it's really kicking into gear in most parts of the world, and that shows how big the problem is."

The official Olympic games-time testing program, run by the IOC, began with the opening of the athletes' village July 27. Competitors are subject to no-notice checks at any time and any place, including training sites in China and abroad.

A total of 4,500 tests will be carried out throughout the Olympic period, up from 3,600 in Athens four years ago. The program includes controls for the blood-boosting substance EPO and human growth hormone. The top five finishers and two randomly selected athletes in each event will be tested for the usual menu of steroids, stimulants, blood boosters and other performance-enhancers.

The Athens Games produced a record 26 doping cases. Based on the increase in the number of tests in Beijing, Rogge has predicted there could be 30 to 40 positives this time.

WADA, which acts in an observer capacity at the games, is refraining from making any predictions on the number of positives in Beijing, but says athletes who do get caught should have known better.

"The chances of them getting away with it are fast reducing, so it's a very silly risk for them to take," Howman said. "If they do get caught here, they are either stupid or their advisers are very stupid. The shame they bring upon themselves, their family and their country is insurmountable."

HOLE-IN-ONE

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TOC organizing committee chairman Ben Babauta explained that even though Tydingco hit a hole-in-one in the 15th, the prize up for grabs for that particular hole sponsored by TOC was only for the closest to the pin.

So, despite pulling out an ace from his sleeve, the Department of Public Works Guam employee and two-time TOC participant was only awarded $500. Incidentally, Jones netted the $500 Saturday after his ball landed within 9'6" of the cup.

In the men's two-day double Peoria category, Alfredo O. Asuncion was No. 1 with his 141.4 score, followed by James C. Lin with his 144.4 and Hidefumi Suzuki with his 144.8. Completing the Top 5 were Jesse Seman and Ray Dela Cruz with their post double Peoria scores of 144.8 and 145, respectively.

Like the winners of the Championship, A, B, C, Seniors, Super Seniors, and Ladies Low Gross, the winners of the double Peoria category won $600 for first place, $500 for second, and $400 for third.

Shirlyn Jones, meanwhile, topped the ladies low net category of the 13th TOC with her 149.8. Alice C. Taitano (148.8) and Yuko Togawa (150) came in second and third.

All winners also went home with handsome trophies courtesy of the TOC organizing committee.

As a recap, Guamanian Louie Sunga won the Championship Fligh with his two-day score of three-over par 147. Other winners were Jin Ahn (A Flight), Luis Byun (B Flight), Mel Grey (C Flight), Edward Manibusan (Seniors Flight), Lito Mendoza (Super Seniors Flight), and Noriko Togawa (Ladies Low Gross).

The 13th Tournament of Champions, which utilized both the east and west courses of the Kagman venue, drew a total of 195 golfers for a weekend of golf-for-a-cause.

This year's TOC marked the 13th year of the tournament on Saipan. Since its inception, TOC has given over $500,000 to the Saipan Beautification Fund. This money has been used for the traffic medians from Garapan to the Palms Resort Saipan, the revitalization of the Garapan special district, the enhanced beautification of the Paseo de Marianas, lighting of the Beach Pathway, landscaping on the port to path walkway and other beautification projects.

ZAPANTA

From Page 28

his fifth of the year.

The 13-year-old Chacha Junior High School student started off on the right foot, knocking down 209 in his first game before rolling pedestrian scores of 133, 145, and 169 in his last three games.

Zapanta added the July title to his previous triumphs in February, March, May, and June.

Trailing Zapanta by 99 pins was April champion Zack Cruz who wound up with a 555 total and a 138 average. Cruz started out slowly by firing pedestrian rolls of 121 and 129 in the first two games. He made up for that with a 181 in the third before closing out with a whimper with a throw of 124.

Nikko Gutierrez finished third with a four-game series of 511 and 127.5 average. He started out with a 134, rolled a 96 in the second, 150 in the third, before struggling again in the final with a 131.

Jonah Delos Reyes, Kevin Royal, and Troy and Toby Verdaguer make up the rest of the participants for the July Bing Prince of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament with pinfall totals of 501, 492, 448, and 320, respectively.

For finishing 1-2-3, Zapanta, Cruz, and Gutierrez won $20, $15, and $10, respectively from SBA. Micronesian Brokers, Inc. also gave Zapanta a case of Selecta Ice Cream.

Jon Hensley and Yho Villavicencio, meanwhile, are leading the July Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes following Sunday's roll-off at the San Jose venue.

Hensley opened up with a low 155 but made up for it with throws of 205 and 215 before concluding with a 173 Sunday to finish with a 748 total and 187 average to top the men's division.

He is followed by Raul Dumapit (743 and 185.75) and Nick Gutierrez (732 and 183).

Villavicencio, for her part, leads the women's division in Day 1 of the monthly tournament after tattooing 693 pinfalls, good for a 173.25 average.

Ron Cal (687 and 171.75) and Gloria Omechalang (666 and 166.5) finished second and third in the Queen of the Lanes.

Results of Day 2 of the two-day King and Queen of the Lanes last night were still not available as of press time.

The Bing Prince/Princess of the Lanes as well as the Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes are sponsored by MARPAC. The tournaments are organized by the Saipan Bowling Association.

ERRATUM

The *Saipan Tribune* mistakenly identified Ferdie Generoso as the Class B champion of the Philippine Bowling Association's 2008 Classified Tournament in a photo yesterday when it should be Allan Hernandez's name in the caption. Our apologies.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	66	44	.600	–
Boston	64	48	.571	3
New York	61	50	.550	5 1/2
Toronto	55	56	.495	11 1/2
Baltimore	53	57	.482	13

Central Division

Minnesota	62	49	.559	–
Chicago	61	49	.555	1/2
Detroit	55	56	.495	7
Kansas City	52	60	.464	10 1/2
Cleveland	48	62	.436	13 1/2

West Division

Los Angeles	69	42	.622	–
Texas	58	54	.518	11 1/2
Oakland	53	57	.482	15 1/2
Seattle	42	69	.378	27

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Philadelphia	61	50	.550	–
Florida	59	53	.527	2 1/2
New York	58	53	.523	3
Atlanta	51	60	.459	10
Washington	41	70	.369	20

Central Division

Chicago	67	45	.598	–
Milwaukee	62	50	.554	5
St. Louis	62	52	.544	6
Houston	53	57	.482	13
Pittsburgh	51	60	.459	15 1/2
Cincinnati	51	61	.455	16

West Division

Arizona	57	54	.514	–
Los Angeles	56	55	.505	1
Colorado	51	62	.451	7
San Francisco	46	64	.418	10 1/2
San Diego	43	69	.384	14 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Colorado 3, Florida 2
Atlanta 5, Milwaukee 0
Washington 4, Cincinnati 2
Houston 4, N.Y. Mets 0
Chicago Cubs 8, Pittsburgh 5
San Diego 4, San Francisco 1
L.A. Dodgers 9, Arizona 3
Philadelphia 5, St. Louis 4
N.Y. Yankees 14, L.A. Angels 9
Boston 5, Oakland 2
Tampa Bay 6, Detroit 5, 10 innings
Minnesota 6, Cleveland 2
Kansas City 14, Chicago White Sox 3
Seattle 8, Baltimore 4
Texas 8, Toronto 4

BRIDGESTONE INVITATIONAL SCORES

AKRON, Ohio (AP)–Scores Sunday from the World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational, a US$8 million (5.1 million euro) PGA Tour event on the 7,400-yard, par-70 South Course at Firestone Country Club:¤

FINAL ROUND

Vijay Singh (4725), US$1,350,000	67-66-69-68	270
Stuart Appleby (2310), $635,000	70-66-67-68	271
Lee Westwood (2310), $635,000	70-65-67-69	271
Retief Goosen (1155), $310,000	66-71-68-67	272
Phil Mickelson (1155), $310,000	68-66-68-70	272
Peter Lonard (912), $220,000	69-66-72-66	273
Darren Clarke (0), $220,000	70-71-65-67	273
Paul Casey (788), $162,500	70-71-68-65	274
D.J. Trahan (788), $162,500	69-67-70-68	274
Hunter Mahan (683), $133,000	71-66-70-68	275
Miguel A. Jimenez (0), $133,000	70-66-70-69	275
Sean O'Hair (578), $111,000	68-67-73-68	276
Chris DiMarco (578), $111,000	68-70-68-70	276
Daniel Chopra (486), $95,500	67-74-66-70	277
Chad Campbell (486), $95,500	68-71-68-70	277
Henrik Stenson (0), $82,625	73-70-68-67	278
K.J. Choi (407), $82,625	73-67-70-68	278
Zach Johnson (407), $82,625	67-68-72-71	278
Ian Poulter (407), $82,625	70-68-69-71	278
Steve Lowery (274), $71,000	75-67-70-67	279
Padraig Harrington (274), $71,000	69-75-68-67	279
Robert Allenby (274), $71,000	71-70-70-68	279
Scott Verplank (274), $71,000	71-70-70-68	279
Robert Karlsson (0), $71,000	71-67-71-70	279
Tim Clark (274), $71,000	67-71-71-70	279
Justin Leonard (274), $71,000	68-70-70-71	279
Oliver Wilson (0), $60,000	71-69-72-68	280
Ernie Els (171), $60,000	69-74-69-68	280
Paul McGinley (0), $60,000	70-67-72-71	280
Nick O'Hern (171), $60,000	70-68-71-71	280
Justin Rose (171), $60,000	71-70-68-71	280
Jim Furyk (171), $60,000	68-69-71-72	280
Charles Howell III (171), $60,000	68-70-70-72	280
Vaughn Taylor (171), $60,000	72-67-69-72	280
Rory Sabbatini (171), $60,000	69-67-70-74	280
Richard Finch (0), $52,000	69-75-70-67	281
Anthony Kim (118), $52,000	71-72-70-68	281
Angel Cabrera (118), $52,000	72-73-68-68	281
Brendan Jones (0), $52,000	69-73-69-70	281
J.B. Holmes (118), $52,000	69-68-72-72	281
Sergio Garcia (118), $52,000	69-72-68-72	281
Trevor Immelman (118), $52,000	75-64-68-74	281
Richard Green (0), $46,600	72-73-70-67	282
Aaron Baddeley (87), $46,600	79-69-66-68	282
Brandt Snedeker (87), $46,600	68-76-69-69	282
Steve Stricker (87), $46,600	68-69-75-70	282
Stewart Cink (87), $46,600	68-68-74-72	282
David Toms (68), $44,250	72-72-70-69	283
Steve Flesch (68), $44,250	70-70-73-70	283
Hidemasa Hoshino (0), $44,250	75-73-65-70	283
Stephen Ames (68), $44,250	69-71-71-72	283
Niclas Fasth (0), $42,250	71-71-72-70	284
Woody Austin (62), $42,250	71-70-72-71	284
Rocco Mediate (62), $42,250	68-73-71-72	284
Chez Reavie (62), $42,250	68-74-70-72	284
Adam Scott (59), $40,000	69-76-72-68	285
Rod Pampling (59), $40,000	69-71-75-70	285
Graeme McDowell (0), $40,000	70-71-73-71	285
Ross Fisher (0), $40,000	69-73-70-73	285
Fredrik Jacobson (59), $40,000	71-71-70-73	285
Nick Dougherty (0), $38,250	72-76-69-69	286
Steve Webster (0), $38,250	68-72-72-74	286
Andres Romero (56), $37,000	73-71-73-70	287
Lucas Glover (56), $37,000	70-75-72-70	287
Scott Strange (0), $37,000	68-74-73-72	287
Boo Weekley (54), $35,750	72-73-71-72	288
Kenny Perry (54), $35,750	74-69-73-72	288
Martin Kaymer (0), $34,500	72-79-68-70	289
Geoff Ogilvy (53), $34,500	71-67-79-72	289
Prayad Marksaeng (0), $34,500	70-73-73-73	289
Brett Rumford (52), $33,250	75-70-76-69	290
Johnson Wagner (52), $33,250	70-74-75-71	290
Soren Hansen (0), $32,500	75-73-70-74	292
J.J. Henry (50), $32,500	69-73-73-77	292
David Howell (0), $32,500	70-75-70-77	292
Pablo Larrazabal (0), $32,000	72-75-71-76	294
Colin Montgomerie (0), $31,750	72-71-76-76	295
James Kingston (0), $31,500	73-72-71-80	296
Craig Parry (48), $31,250	70-75-75-77	297
Mark Brown (0), $31,000	80-75-76-70	301

-FedExCup points in parentheses

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Masters caging eyes Aug. 20 start

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Masters Basketball League organizers, from left, Ray Basa, Arnold Mesa, Joe Pangelinan, Andy Nepaial, and Ray Takai pose for a photo after a recent meeting.

The Masters Basketball League is planning a revival of sorts with the new set of organizers hoping to jumpstart the 35-and-over competition as early as Aug. 20.

In an interview last week with Arnold Mesa, the longtime basketball supporter and BANMI referee said his group was given the blessing by NMASA Hall of Famer Tony Rogolifoi to take over the reins of the MBL.

He said with Rogolifoi's acquiescence, the 2008 edition of the MBL will incorporate a new format where each participating team is allowed to only recruit five players aged 35 years old.

Mesa said participating teams can round out their respective rosters by filling the seven remaining roster spots with players in the 40, 45, 50, and even 55 age bracket.

He said this new format would give the league parity since the relatively younger MBL players would no longer be concentrated into two or three teams.

Mesa said eligible players are those who are already 35 years old as of Aug. 20. Those who turn 35 on Aug. 21 or later would have to wait for next year to take part in the masters competition.

He added that interested teams should turn in their rosters, with players' proof of age, before the tentative Aug. 20 kickoff date.

The 2008 MBL is being organized, according to Mesa, to allow the CNMI to take part in the 2009 Masters Olympics set for next year in Australia.

He said there are also plans to send a MBL selection to a goodwill masters basketball tournament in neighboring Guam set this coming October and November.

Entrance fee for the 2008 MBL is $500 per team or $25 per player. While teams are required to sport uniforms, T-shirts or tops of the same color will do.

Aside from Mesa, other members of the new MBL organizing committee are BANMI secretary general Michael White, CNMI Men's National Team coach Rufino Aguon, Tony Sablan, Ed Manalili, Abner Venus, and Dave Demapan.

Rogolifoi is also part of the organizing committee but only as an adviser as the all-time baseball and basketball great serves as the commissioner of the Saipan Major League.

He currently is running the 2008 Budweiser Saipan Major League and will also organize the 2008 SML Fall League and the 2008 Masters Baseball League soon.

For more information about the 2008 MBL, call Mesa at 868-6578.

Tinian's Borja leads govt/biz scoring

MARK RABAGO
The 2008 PTI Inter-Government Business Basketball League's scoring race is currently being led by, from left, Tinian's Anthony Borja, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Abong Camacho, and Northern Marianas College's Mark Wallace.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tinian's Anthony Borja now leads scoring race in the 2008 PTI Inter-Government Business Basketball League even as new faces now occupy seven of the Top 15 slots of the inaugural competition.

In statistics compiled and submitted by PTI Inter-Government Business Basketball League coordinator Joey Dela Cruz, Borja has been credited for 243 points in nine games to average 27 points per game.

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs center Abong Camacho finished a shade under the Tinian small forward's per game norm with his 26.8 average.

In six games, the 6'3" behemoth banged in 161 points. Camacho, however, will no longer add to his season's total as the U.S. Army Reserve flew to Guam last month to prepare for his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Northern Marianas College high-flying swingman Mark Wallace is in third place after his 152 points in six games allowed him to norm 25.3 markers per ballgame.

Bank of Guam Express do-it-all forward James Villacrusis and NMC rainbow artist Jose Tumaquip complete the Top 5 with averages of 21.4 and 19.7 points per game, respectively. Villacrusis so far has scored 193 points in nine games, while the pint-sized Tumaquip has logged in 138 markers in seven outings.

The rest of the current Top 15 in the 2008 PTI Inter-Government Business Basketball League are Department of Corrections' Luis Iguel (19.6 ppg), PTI's Edsel Mendoza (19.2 ppg), DOC's Jeff Quitugua (19 ppg), BoG's Randy Pelisamen (16.9 ppg), DCCA's Elias Rangamar (16.2), PTI's Elmer Esdrelon (15.7 ppg), BoG's Jason Taisacan (14.7 ppg), Legislature's Ray Duenas (13.9 ppg), PTI's Bruce Berline (13.7 ppg), and Legislature's Dave Apatang (13.1 ppg).

Of the 15, only Borja, Camacho, Villacrusis, Tumaquip, Iguel, Quitugua, Pelisamen, and Rangamar are holdovers from the last time Dela Cruz released an update in the scoring race for the competition.

In the team standings, host PTI is currently lording it over the rest of the 12-team field with a 6-0 mark, followed by NMC (6-1), DOC (5-2), Autonomous (4-2), DCCA (4-2), BoG (6-4), Tinian (4-5), Legislature (3-6), Aguaguat (2-4), Department of Public Works/Procurement & Supply (2-5), Department of Public Safety (0-5), and Commonwealth Ports Authority (0-6).

Currently, the games of the 2008 PTI Inter-Government Business Basketball League are on-and-off due to the power outages at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Sufa Golf Tournament set on August 23

The Sufa Softball Association will be holding a golf fundraiser this coming Aug. 23 at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Koblerville.

The organization's vice president Joe Salas said the event, dubbed simply as the Sufa Golf Tournament, is Sufa Softball Association's last and final fundraising before the team departs to the 4th Annual Labor Day Softball Tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Sufa Golf Tournament will have a registration time of between 10:30am and 11:45am with a shotgun start of 12pm. Tournament fee is $100.

After the tournament, players are requested to proceed to the awards banquet presentation at the Minachom Atdao Pavilion in Susupe.

Salas said the proceeds from the fundraiser will once again help defray the cost of airfare, hotel, and other miscellaneous expenses of the team while they compete in Nevada. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Rotary cage start pushed back a week

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Youth who are pining to get their basketball fix will have to wait one more week, as the 2008 Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League has been pushed back to an Aug. 11 start.

Coordinator and Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands president Elias Rangamar said he decided to postpone the start of the 18-and-under basketball competition to give participating teams more time to complete their roster and raise their entry fees.

"Please be informed that the Rotary league will be pushed back another week to give teams a chance to turn in all required documents. To date, only two teams have submitted their requirements. Some teams are asking extra time so I'm pushing the league back until next week," the affable Division of Sports and Recreation staff said in an email.

The 2008 Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League originally eyed an Aug. 4 start date.

Entrance fee for the Rotary league is $150 for the 15-18 division, while teams hoping to see action in the 14-and-under age group need only to fork over $100.

Division I (15-18) will be played Monday to Friday beginning Aug. 11, while Division II (12-14) will only play during weekends, according to Rangamar.

Rangamar added that uniforms—at least the top—are required for all teams wishing to take part in the 18-and-under competition.

For more inquiries about the Saipan Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League, contact Rangamar at 664-2502.

The defending champion for the 2008 Rotary league is the Rufino Aguon-coached CNMI Junior Nationals, which beat the Southern Sonics in their winner-take-all finals late last year in a score of 98-91.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
The defending champion for the 2008 Rotary league is the Rufino Aguon-coached CNMI Junior Nationals, which beat the Southern Sonics in their winner-take-all finals late last year in a score of 98-91.

Masters caging eyes Aug. 20 start

The Masters Basketball League is planning a revival of sorts with the new set of organizers hoping to jumpstart the 35-and-over competition as early as Aug. 20.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Singh captures 1st World Golf Championship

Vijay Singh nearly threw away the Bridgestone Invitational by missing three putts inside 8 feet on the back nine at Firestone. He won his first World Golf Championship by making the last one, which was all that mattered.

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NMI bets expected to do well in Fiji

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

National coach Jeff Race believes the CNMI will do well in this year's Pacific Oceania Junior Championships with Ji Hoon Heo and Mayuko Arriola representing the islands' best hopes in Lautoka, Fiji.

"I have just arrived back on Saipan this morning (Sunday) and we will be going to Fiji on Wednesday. I think our team will do very well there this year, based on what I know and what ITF's Dan O'Connell has told me."

The former Pacific Oceania Davis Cup captain said he has full confidence in Heo's ability of winning the boys' 18-and-under division of the POJC, despite the recent spate of injuries that befell the CNMI wunderkind.

Arriola

Heo

"Unfortunately, he has been plagued all summer by injuries and has had little practice. Still, he may be able to pull it together and round into form during the tournament," he said of the 16-year-old Marianas High School student.

Race also said that Arriola is ready as could be as the days count down to the POJC at the Dr. Robin Mitchell Tennis Centre.

"Mayuko has had a lot of practice this summer. I expect Mayuko will contend for a spot in the Top 4 this year. She was playing great going into the NPQ, won the finals easily, and has the goal ahead of her of trying out for the University of Oregon tennis team," he said.

Race also singled out up-and-coming netter Thea Minor, who is considering a one-year scholarship at the ITF training center in Fiji.

"Thea should be one of the top two players this year. She has been invited to apply to attend the ITF Training Cen-

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Dozens of athletes caught for doping before coming to Beijing for 2008 Olympic Games

By STEPHEN WILSON
AP SPORTS WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—There's one good way of avoiding a rash of damaging doping scandals at the Olympics: Catch the drug cheats before they get there.

The policy seems to be working ahead of the Beijing Games, with dozens of Olympic athletes from different sports and countries nabbed in recent weeks and months for various doping offenses.

The drug busts are the result of a global program of increased out-of-competition screenings, including targeted testing of suspected dopers, to weed out as many dirty athletes as possible from the 10,000 competitors coming to Beijing for the Aug. 8-24 games.

"Our message has been: 'Leave the cheats at home. Catch them before they leave your shores,'" World Anti-Doping Agency president John Fahey told The Associated Press. "We're seeing the dividends."

An unofficial count by The Associated Press found at least 45 athletes from 11 countries have been ruled out of the Olympics in the last few weeks for drug violations. The list includes athletes in track and filed, swimming, wrestling, weightlifting, boxing, fencing and cycling.

"You'll probably find the number is even higher," WADA

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AP

A worker puts the finishing touches on a huge swimming poster at an Olympic sponsor outlet inside the Olympic Green in Beijing, Thursday, July 31, 2008. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games open on Aug. 8.

Hole-in-one for Tydingco in 13th TOC

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

George Tydingco aced hole No. 15 in the east course of last Sunday's 13th Tournament of Champions at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

While last year's hole-in-one netted Japanese par-buster Koji Hashimoto a 2008 Mitsubishi Lancer, Tydingco only got $500 for his effort, the same money collected by Microl Corp.'s Richard Jones on Saturday after winning the guaranteed closest to the pin cash prize in the same hole.

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MARK RABAGO

13th Tournament of Champions organizing committee chairman Ben Babauta, right, poses with George Tydingco, who aced the 15th hole of the east course Sunday to win the $500 closest to the pin prize.

Zapanta completes Bing back-to-back

By MARK RABAGO
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June winner Raphael Zapanta completed a Bing back-to-back when he won the July Bing Prince of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament last Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center in San Jose.

The son of bowling officials Ross and Gigi Zapanta knocked down 656 pinfalls in a four-game series to finish with an average of 164 to hoist July's youth championship, which is already

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July Bing Prince of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament champion Raphael Zapanta is flanked by runners-up Zach Cruz, left, and Nikko Gutierrez last Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center in San Jose.

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